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H. WALTER BARNETT.

THE HONOURABLE SYLVIA STANLEY.

Hyde Park Corner.



**THE Journal for all interested in
Country Life and Country Pursuits**

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**THE IMPORTATION
OF HORSES.**

TO a horse-breeding country like Great Britain it is of importance to know what animals are brought into the kingdom, and whence they come. The competition from abroad may not be very formidable at the moment, but there is always a chance of its assuming greater proportions in the future. In another part of the paper attention has been directed from time to time to the success achieved in the breeding of thorough-breds on the Continent. Our best sires are continually being purchased by foreign and Colonial breeders, who thus obtain the material for challenging the pre-eminence so long enjoyed by England. In France, M. Edmond Blanc has shown that it is possible to breed race-horses which are, to say the least, as good as anything we have in this country; and the prices occasionally paid for Australian horses show that there, too, the science of horse-breeding is making very rapid progress. It is, therefore, important for our agriculturists to know as far as possible the number of horses brought into this country annually, and to be placed in possession of the facts that would show them how far it would be possible to meet the demand for our own studs and stables. In regard to the first point, it seems that the annual importation amounts to about 26,000, and of these by far the majority are either polo and other ponies or light draught horses. From the United States we get a great many of the animals used in public vehicles, such as omnibuses and tramcars. Obviously, therefore, it would scarcely be worth while for farmers to exert themselves to meet this demand, because all the indications tend to show that electricity or some other motor-power is likely to replace the use of horses in this direction. Some of them, however, are used for vans, and it may be taken as certain that, whatever may be the developments of the motor-car, there will always be a need of vans and of horses to pull them. In this connection it has to be noticed that we ask for little help from abroad in regard to the supply of heavy draught horses.

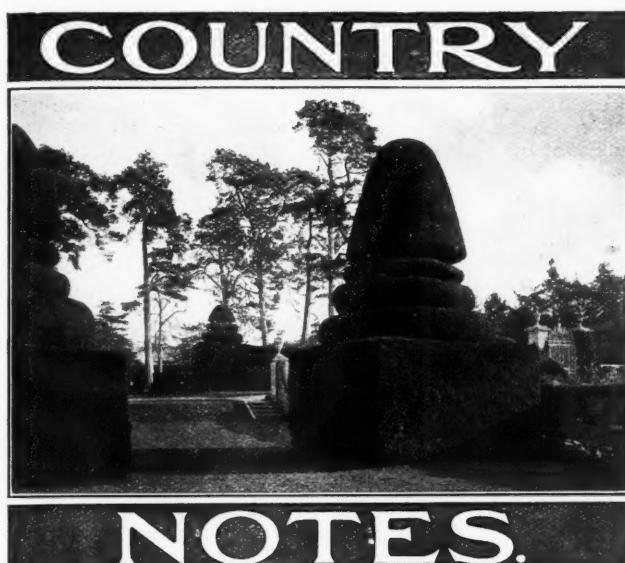
The great impulse which has been given of recent years to the breeding of Shires, Clydesdales, and Suffolk Punches has ensured a supply of first-class horses for trolleys, brewers' drays, and other heavy traffic. Some of the heavy draught horses which we import are from Normandy, where they have been bred from stock purchased in this country. We also obtain a few from Belgium, but the number is not very important, as it seldom rises above 500 a year, and is often a considerable number short of that. From the Low Countries, too, we get those solemn-looking, long-maned, long-tailed black horses that are used for the conventional funeral. Their employment will probably continue, despite the increasing popularity of cremation, for there is always a section of the population which takes a kind of woebegone delight in a pompous funeral, and will insist on having those prancing black horses, with the palls and other accessories, just as it insists on the use of black-edged note-paper. On the other hand, there is a very decided reaction against the ostentation involved in the employment of these "trappings of woe."

One kind of horse brought to a considerable extent from abroad, and for which there is a constant demand, is the carriage horse. A few years ago Canada seemed in the way of monopolising this supply. They look very fine when they come across, most of them being showy and upstanding horses; but the experience of those who purchased them rather enthusiastically about ten years ago was that they were somewhat soft and difficult to acclimatise, so that the recent tendency has been to return to that old favourite, the Cleveland bay. Still, there is no doubt that Canadian breeders have a keen eye to the English market, and as they suffer from no lack either of enterprise or of intelligence, it is possible that they may yet be able in the future to meet its requirements. The horses they send over in addition to carriage horses are not of a very high type, and do not enter into serious competition with the home-bred article. It is somewhat curious that the supply of horses from the Argentine is not larger, since, at the present moment, it only amounts to between 400 and 500 a year. Yet the farmers and landowners of the Argentine are continually purchasing the best stock they can obtain from England, so that home traders look on that country as an important source of supply, and in time its competition may be much more formidable than it is at the present moment. The majority of the horses sent over by them just now are used mostly for tradesmen's carts. In addition to the demand for full-sized horses, there is also a very considerable market in Great Britain for small ponies. These are used for a variety of purposes. Some are sent down the coal-shafts, and the smallest tradesmen make considerable demands upon this class of animal for use in their carts. A great number come from Iceland and Greenland. The former country sends an animal as small as those which we get from Shetland, but not quite so useful. A number of them are sent over from Russia also. They are, as a rule, cheap and of an inferior quality, and of very little use, except to hawkers and costermongers and people of that description.

Thus a review of the subject need not cause much alarm to the home breeder at the present moment. Neither in quantity nor in quality, with the one exception of thorough-breds, are the horses sent into England superior or even equal to those which we breed at home. What the future may bring forth, however, it is difficult to say. One remarkable fact must be apparent to anyone interested in the question. This is that, despite the great increase that has taken place in the use of mechanical power, the demand for horses, far from falling off, seems continually to increase. The prices at the present moment, especially of the animals of a good type, remain entirely satisfactory, and not even the withdrawal of so many thousands of horses from use in omnibuses and tramcars, which used to make so great a demand upon them, has been sufficient to lower the price. It is just as it was when steam traction was introduced. Instead of diminishing the demand for horses, the growth of traffic actually increased it, and if we look into the matter in detail, we can easily see how all this happens. Motors for pleasure may be left out of consideration, although it has to be noted that they have not lessened the demand for good carriage horses; but the business motors, especially those that travel in the country, have only tapped new sources of trade, and in many cases have actually enhanced the demand. Horse-breeding, therefore, is likely to continue one of the safest branches of English agriculture, especially as far as the farmer is concerned who can breed heavy draught horses, which up to a certain age can be used on his farm and afterward sold for use in the traffic of towns.

Our Portrait Illustration.

OUR frontispiece this week is a portrait of the Honourable Sylvia Stanley, the second daughter of Lord Stanley of Alderley. Miss Stanley is engaged to be married to the Honourable Anthony Henley of the Royal Scots Greys.



NOTES.

ON Friday last the House of Commons discussed the question of importing store cattle from Canada on the second reading of the Diseases of Animals Act (1896) Amendment Bill, which was moved by Mr. Cairns of Newcastle. The object of this measure is to make orders sanctioning the landing in Great Britain of cattle from the Dominion, and to do away with the regulations with regard to quarantine and slaughter now in force. In our own columns the arguments *pro* and *con.* have been already set forth. The secretary for Scotland of the Free Importation Canadian Cattle Association of Great Britain enunciated in a letter, published on March 17th, the reasons of those who are agitating in favour of the measure. His chief point was that during thirty years of importation "neither the Board of Agriculture nor any other party can produce a record of any case of scheduled disease in Canada or of Canadian cattle infecting British cattle with any kind of disease." This was, practically speaking, the attitude of the mover and seconder of the second reading of this last Bill, who also thought that the importation of live stores would benefit the consumers.

Naturally enough the Irish members were strongly opposed to the measure. The new peasant proprietors to a great extent send store cattle to Great Britain, and would no doubt be affected; but the real objections were most luminously stated in a letter from Mr. Chaplin, which appeared in *The Times* on Monday last. He pointed out that the dangers chiefly apprehended are not those from any immediate outbreak of pleuro-pneumonia, or of foot-and-mouth disease. The latter can be conveyed from one animal to another in many different ways, and according to some experts sometimes by game or birds. Even the immediate slaughter of animals on landing is no protection against its introduction, total prohibition being the only safeguard. Pleuro-pneumonia is a very insidious disease, and difficult to detect. Frequently it is not disclosed until after a long period of incubation. Further, Mr. Chaplin goes on to say, "It is not so much a sudden outbreak as an outbreak more or less deferred" that is to be feared. In the end the Prime Minister, in view of the great diversity of opinion to which expression had been given during the debate, left it to the unfettered decision of the House.

In one respect we are glad to welcome the decision arrived at by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman. Questions of this kind ought to be removed as far as possible from the din of party warfare. There is a tendency on one side to raise the cry of Free Trade as a reason for passing the Bill, and the other side is sometimes accused of Protectionist tendencies in opposing it; but what we hope will occur is that the House of Commons will set itself to sift the arguments thoroughly, so as to bring the merits of the question to the criterion of common-sense. Livestock, taken altogether, is one of the most valuable of our national assets, and we ought to take at least as much trouble to safeguard it as the French, for instance, do to safeguard their crops from any phylloxera that might be imported from abroad.

As we write the prospects for the Easter holiday could not possibly be more bright. April brought with it a delightful change of weather, and, if the sunshine continues, the townspeople will be able to obtain what to many will, no doubt, be a first taste of the coming spring. Already it has made its advent visible in the Southern Counties, though we fear that the Northern landscapes still retain much of the bleakness of winter. But from London southwards the first delicate green verdure is

already beginning to appear on the hawthorns by the roadside. A million weeds and wild flowers are striving and struggling at the roots to be in advance of the spring. Primroses were very early this year, and many of the glades are yellow with them; while it is evident that the bluebell must be out somewhere, for we have seen bunches of them on sale in the London streets, though not ourselves so fortunate as to meet with them in their native haunts. As Mr. William Watson says, or sings, April is here with her "girlish laughter," but we hope she has not in the background a copious supply of her "girlish tears."

According to the returns issued by the Board of Trade, the movement which resulted in such a satisfactory return of national income for the last year has been continued. The first three months of 1905 were extremely good, but in the same period for 1906 their record is completely broken. In all classes of goods we have an increase both in the exports, imports, and re-exports. In food, drink, and tobacco the increased importation amounts to three-quarters of a million, and the export to half a million, while there is a much larger increase in raw materials and articles mainly manufactured; but the most striking feature of the returns lies in the fact that exports of articles wholly or mainly manufactured have increased by ten and three-quarter millions. These figures are very satisfactory inasmuch as they tend to show the strength and permanency of this newly-arrived commercial prosperity.

THE YOUNG IDEA.

You wander about my gravel walks,
(*Barmaid, Barmaid, in with you, Barmaid!*)
You tumble among the carnation stalks,
And the children laugh, and the gardener talks.
(*Barmaid, forrad away!*)

Our sober pug at your folly scowls,
(*Barmaid, Barmaid, in with you, Barmaid!*)
But you roll him over, despite his growls,
And playfully bite his ears till he howls.
(*Barmaid, forrad away!*)

Wild oats, young lady. The flowers of June,
(*Barmaid, Barmaid, in with you, Barmaid!*)
And the fun of youth will be over soon:
Then, what of the grey November noon?
(*Barmaid, forrad away!*)

What of the serious work ahead,
(*Barmaid, Barmaid, in with you, Barmaid!*)
When the horn has gone, and the rogue in red
Is slinking away from the osier-bed?
(*Barmaid, forrad away!*)

A. C.

The Lyceum Club certainly deserves some praise for adding to the gaiety of nations. The lady members, or their representatives, appear to have taken in hand the dissemination of friendly international views. Some little time ago they entertained a great German statesman, and had the satisfaction of listening to speeches which were afterwards read throughout Europe. On Saturday night last they paid a similar compliment to M. Paul Cambon, the French Ambassador in London. He made a brilliant and amusing speech, in which he said, amongst other things, that this was the first occasion on which he had been the guest of a ladies' club. Still more interesting was it to hear him declare that there are no ladies' clubs in France, but that it would be curious to find out the reason why. We all know how admirable the French women of the best type are, and how they differ essentially from the women of this country. M. Cambon seems to think that the English women concern themselves less with the business of the masculine part of the establishment to which they belong, and consequently enjoy much more freedom. Perhaps that may be so, but, nevertheless, the old French salon resembled the exclusive club in some of its most delightful aspects.

At this season it may be timely to say a word to fruit-growers about the vexed question of marketing their produce. Many of them have had the experience of being unable to get anything like an adequate price for their fruit, and yet to see it sold in the street at what would have been a generous remuneration to them. Apples are a case in point. It is not uncommon for them to be sold, when there is even a slight glut in the market, as low as 2s. a bushel, and to be retailed at 2d. a pound, yielding a profit of 300 per cent. to be divided amongst the middlemen employed. Occurrences of the same kind are frequent, and one wonders if it would not be possible to make some change in the market arrangements which would give the cultivator a better return for his labour. Many market gardeners and orchard keepers have been thoroughly discouraged by the results of their following the usual plan and sending their produce to be sold by auction at one of the chief

markets, while it is not given to everyone to be able to form a circle of private customers. Before growing the fruit it is a good thing to know whether it will be possible to dispose of it.

The solution of the difficulty must lie between two alternatives. If there is any chance of finding a local market it is the most satisfactory from every point of view. It avoids commission and railway carriage, while, in many cases, where a cart has to be kept for other purposes, if it is used for the distribution of produce, at, practically, no expense to the owner. But where this is not possible the example set by the Essex growers is worthy of consideration; that is, the establishment of shops which would be managed by an association or co-operative body of growers. The dairy farmers of the same county found salvation in a plan that they work on the same principle; and what was done in the case of milk can surely be easily effected in regard to vegetables, fruit, and other garden produce. At the same time, a word ought to be said against the awful multiplication of shops. We think it would be much more advisable for the cultivators to combine, and so be able to carry on several large concerns, than to work separately with shops necessarily small.

Some very interesting facts are stated as a preface to the annual accounts sent out by the society which maintains the Farne Islands as a breeding-place for wildfowl. This body may be congratulated on showing, for the first time in many years, a small sum in hand. Last season they describe as a very good breeding one, though the rascal gulls destroyed most of the cormorants' eggs and a great many young eider-ducks. How to deal with the robbers is a very difficult problem, especially in a place which is kept as a sanctuary for wild life. They do not seem to mind much if their eggs are taken, and it would be against the whole spirit of the undertaking to thin their numbers. The Arctic terns are said to have hatched out very well, but a large proportion of the young died for want of food, and the old birds left the islands a month or two sooner than usual. The Sandwich terns did very well, with plenty of sand-eels to eat. The roseate terns, razorbills, and puffins are increasing, but the guillemots seem to be always about the same in numbers.

The jackdaw is not the sort of bird which would get the credit of performing a kindly action, as he is generally associated with thievish ways. The action of a jackdaw in County Antrim, however, should help to place the family in a better light. A bird of this species was seen very often going to a magpie's nest, and being watched, it was found that the jackdaw was most industrious in collecting food, all of which it conveyed to the young magpies! It is a most extraordinary and unusual circumstance for one bird to feed the young of another.

A case which came before the magistrates of refusal to exhibit a shooting licence when called upon to do so serves to emphasise the fact, which hardiy requires such emphasis to make it obvious, that some change is needed in the manner of demanding the production of shooting licences by the Excise officers. In the case in point the officer seems to have come up to the shooters when they had already taken their places for a partridge-drive, and the birds were actually coming over. That any of the guns should have paused in their shooting in order to satisfy the ill-timed zeal of the official is singular enough, and says much for their respect for the law as embodied in his person. Clearly he was not acting in a way calculated to foster that respect, and one of the party, himself a magistrate and a county councillor, bid the official go to a warm place. The Bench dismissed the summons which the official thereupon brought, on the ground that the strong language, although regrettable, was almost excusable in the circumstances, and was directly provoked by the official's indiscretion. But the law, or its administration, stands in need of change. At present a man in plain clothes, probably on a bicycle, approaches a shooting party. He may be a touring cyclist; perhaps he is; at all events, he produces no other badge or sign of office than the audacity with which he confronts a body of armed men and addresses to them a demand which may be legal, but is certainly insulting. Shooting men are those who are particularly concerned with the protection that the proper enforcement of shooting licences provides, but Excise officers ought to show a little consideration and to produce some evidence of their position.

There has been some rather interesting though vague correspondence in one of the morning papers as to the means adopted to exterminate rats in country houses. A lady wrote, apparently in despair, enquiring how it were possible to rid her house of what admittedly is as unpleasant and destructive a scourge as may readily be imagined. She had, she averred, tried nearly as many methods of clearing the establishment over which she presides of the rodent pest as she had heard of. The effects of some had been even more objectionable than

the rats themselves, and to make matters worse, there seemed to be no appreciable reduction of the rodent population. The wife of a bishop wrote saying that when her husband received his present preferment and entered upon the occupation of the palace attached to the See, rats almost held possession of the building. She introduced a pair of mongooses, and as if by magic the rats disappeared. The singular part of the story is that as far as the bishop's wife was able to discover, the animals did not kill the rats, and she could only conclude that their presence scared them away. The mongooses still remain at the palace, and have not unnaturally become great favourites with the episcopal family. Chatelaines of rat-ridden country houses need not, therefore, lose heart.

We have often wondered how long the continuance of the present disgusting butchers' shops would be permitted in our streets. Disgusting they are, considered not merely from the aesthetic standpoint, but also from the sanitary. Here is food which will be eaten at to-night's dinner exposed to all the filth and germs with which the atmosphere of a crowded street is ever laden; and yet we pride ourselves on the immense care we take to procure pure food! The firm who have recently opened a shop in London not open to such a reproach, have in so doing proved themselves a long way ahead of most of the sanitary reformers of the time, and we feel sure they will reap a well-deserved reward. All perishable food is cooled and kept in air-tight glass cases, so that the most fastidious housewife can inspect the fish, flesh, and even the good red herring as easily as ever, and in an atmosphere pure as that of her own boudoir. Her skirts may be allowed to take care of themselves the while, as the shop is actually carpeted. No flies, of course, can reach the contents of the shop, and it really does seem, at last, as if the germs, who have rioted so long and luxuriously on our "vittles," were going to have a very hard time of it indeed.

L I F E.

Be young, dear my soul; soon shall others be men,
And I being dead shall be dark earth.

—Greek Anthology.

Be young, my soul,
Through this brief hour,
For Death takes toll
Of all thy flower
And ends the scroll.

Doth he give sleep?
Or joy or tears
In pastures deep?
The untold years
Their secrets keep.

Men close thine eyes
Nor know regret,
The starry skies
Are theirs as yet
And Love's surprise.

And so be young
Whilst yet ye may,
Ere Death have flung
Sweet Youth away
With song unsung.

MABEL LEIGH.

Show Sunday and Palm Sunday happened this year to be one and the same day, and while the rustics in North Wales were keeping the festival, so called flowery artists and art critics were doing the round of the studios in St. John's Wood and its neighbourhood. They were admiring, or not admiring, according as it happened, various pictures which will be on view next month in Burlington House. Many of the canvases were full of promise. Mr. E. A. Abbey is showing "Columbus in the New World." Sir Edward J. Poynter will be represented only by a portrait of the Duchess of Northumberland and a water-colour. Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema has done an illustration of that poem of Tennyson's which Fitzgerald loved so well, "Ask me no more." Mr. Orchardson is sending only a single portrait, that of Sir Francis Younghusband. Mr. G. A. Storey has found a subject in "Leda" with her swan-lover. Mr. Alfred East can fairly be called topical, since his picture was painted at Algeciras. Northamptonshire has given four landscapes to Mr. David Murray. Mr. Briton Riviere is sending a portrait of Professor Frank Clowes with an Aberdeen terrier beside him. Mr. S. J. Solomon, the youngest Academician, has sent a group of portraits, and Mr. Arthur Hacker an allegory called "The Hours," in addition to two or three portraits. The Academy, it is evident, will possess all its usual attractions.

The subject of crime and criminal statistics always has a certain fascination, even for those who have no immediate prospect of contributing to it by their personal acts. Some o-

the New York papers have lately published the criminal statistics of the United States for the past year, from which it seems that that great country has now the distinction of a larger proportion of criminals to its population than any other people sufficiently civilised to keep statistics of the kind. Until last year Italy headed the list. According to last year's returns, the United States lead with 115 criminals to every million inhabitants. Italy is a very good second with 105, England, after long interval, is quoted third with 27, France has 19, and Germany 13. But evidently there are others that should come into the long gap between Italy and England. Crime, no doubt, is to a great extent a matter of national temperament and of climate. In the old law of Spain the death penalty for homicide used to be relaxed during the prevalence of the sirocco. They had to repeal the law, because it was found that if a man wished to murder his friend he forbore till the sirocco blew, so as to get off with as light a penalty for his homicide as possible. But the very idea of the law shows

ancient recognition of the influence of climate on crime. In the United States they have many climates and many national temperaments. It is, perhaps, only natural that they should have many criminals.

Two very British traits of a creditable character have been exhibited by Mr. Warner's M.C.C. team in South Africa, and that perhaps is the best praise that we can bestow on it: it has thoroughly under-rated its opponents, and it has taken its beatings well. Of the Test Matches it has succeeded in winning one out of five, and in the last it was most handsomely defeated by an innings and sixteen runs. To go into the details of a campaign of disaster would be only painful, and would serve no interesting end; but it is to be hoped that a team more worthy to represent the M.C.C. and to cope with the South Africans will be sent out to "bring back the ashes" before they have been allowed to grow too cold.

CRAYFISHING IN GERMANY.

FOR a long time considerable misapprehensions have existed with regard to the habits and life of the crayfish (we refer to the fresh-water species). For example, it used to be asserted that these creatures acted as the scavengers of the waters, feeding on carcasses. It is true that crayfish feed upon carrion, but only when it is quite fresh. They reject the putrid flesh of dead animals. The crayfish feeds chiefly on shellfish, snails, frogs, worms, and small fish, and on occasions will eat reeds and rushes and the young shoots of other water-plants. It is no secret that the crayfish inclines towards cannibalism, and sometimes devours one of its own kind. Some little time ago our investigator discovered that of 100 to 120 eggs laid by a crayfish, half, at least, were properly developed, but only 15 to 20 eggs were good for reproductive purposes. So far, artificial hatching has not proved a success, therefore it comes about that the female crayfish needs to be most carefully guarded from the many enemies which prey upon her. Of fishes, eels and eel-pout have a special predilection for the crayfish. Both these kinds of fish are in the habit of following the crayfish into its hole and overcoming it in spite of its resistance. The otter and the water-rat very often attack the crayfish at the time when it is casting its shell, and is, therefore, defenceless. But men are its most deadly enemies. They pursue the creature on account of its delicacy as an eatable, and if special means are not taken to preserve the crayfish, one fine day people will find out that it is only to be seen in aquariums and naturalists' cabinets. Crayfish are trapped in a multitude of different ways. One method of securing them is as follows: Those



LOADING EEL-POTS INTO BOAT.

whose business it is to catch them employ the so-called eel-pot, a cylinder-shaped vessel with large openings at either end, which grow narrower towards the centre until they finally close up. These pots are also so arranged that the crayfish, once in the orifice, cannot get out again. They are baited with shellfish, frogs, snails, etc., a stone is attached, and the pot is placed on the river-bed. Our first picture shows us the apparatus used when this method is employed. The second way is on a smaller scale, and is carried out by means of what is called the "crayfish trap." This consists of a number of small sticks piled up on one big log in the shape of a pyramid. A decapitated frog is tied to the small sticks to serve as bait. The trap is placed in the water, and the crayfish in search of food is attracted by it. The fisherman has to wait until he hears a click, and then it is only necessary to draw up the apparatus, when the crayfish will be found stuck fast to it.

The last method of catching these creatures is by far the most original. A number of men provide themselves with faggots of pine-wood and beat the water. The crayfish, allured by glimmers of light, comes up to the surface of the water and is caught with the hands. In this operation it is necessary to exercise the utmost care, as the crayfish, at the first appearance of danger, disappears with extraordinary rapidity. The pursuit of capturing crayfish is practised with fairly good results, and forms an interesting occupation, especially when a good specimen is trapped.

In conclusion, let us consider the idea still held by some people, that the crayfish runs backwards; this is a great exaggeration. The creature runs forwards just the same as other animals, but when danger threatens, and



HAND-NETS FOR CRAYFISH.



CAPTURING CRAYFISH BY TORCHLIGHT.

he thinks he can reach his hole more easily, he makes off backwards. His habit of doing this is the result of the difficulty he finds in turning round, so that he prefers to move backwards on the ground when in a hurry.

H. KASPER.

CURIOS NESTS.

IN India and Ceylon, in which countries the writer lived for many years, the nests of the feathered tribes, as in all Eastern lands, exceed in ingenuity even those to be seen at home. The most celebrated are probably what are known as the "edible nests" built by one of the family of swifts (*Collocalia nidifica*), and so much prized by Chinese gourmets that they give for them double their weight in silver; that is to say, if the young have not been reared in them, which of course decreases their value. The principal country from whence these delicacies are imported into the Celestial Empire is Java, but a trade is also carried on with Ceylon and India. "E. H. A.," in his book on "The Common Birds of Bombay," describes these nests as being the work of the palm-swift (*Cypselus batassiensis*), which builds in the brab, or tar palm; but in Ceylon they are always found in caves, generally on the seashore, though sometimes as far inland as Newera Eliya, between 6,000ft. and 7,000ft. above its level. There is in "the Isle of Spices" a palm-swift as well, but it does not line its nest with mucus, as does that of India, and its choice of a spot in which to build falls on the palmyra, tar palms not being indigenous in Ceylon. The "edible nests" of the *Collocalia nidifica* are about the size of a goose-egg, lined with a substance resembling strings of isinglass of a reddish white colour, and very brittle, tasting when cooked like vermicelli. Sir C. Home suggested that they are formed of a glutinous matter secreted in

the mouths of the birds by large salivary glands, which is very probable; some think they are composed of a kind of seaweed. The latter theory has now been practically abandoned, and it is generally allowed that the robbing of the nests before the hatching of the young is an act of great cruelty, since the birds immediately set to work to build new ones, and the excessive drain on their saliva exhausts their strength to such a degree that they are often found dead in numbers near the spot where they had meant to rear their brood.

But curious as such nests are, they do not show the same forethought as do those of that exquisite little creature the sunbird, "the fairy king of flowers," from whom one would not expect much subtlety, seeing that it is scarcely larger than an ordinary English butterfly, and is so lovely that beauty rather than talent would seem to be its strong point. But it must have an astute little brain in its burnished little head, for this is how it constructs its tiny home. In company with its mate, to whom it proves a most affectionate partner, the union being, so it is believed, a life-

long one, it chooses some exposed spot probably close to the public road, and proceeds to build on an overhanging twig. This is in order to throw its enemies off the scent, for who would think of the most simple-minded of birds selecting such a spot? The finishing touches being put to the small abode, it is left, according to one authority, severely alone until spiders have woven their webs—which entangle any floating *débris*—over and around it. Another naturalist says that the birds themselves turn rag-men, and, collecting any rubbish they can find in the way of moss, faded leaves, ends of cotton and other such trifles, stick them on the outside of the nest, by means of pieces of purloined webs. In either case the result is the same, and "they have made their future home a thoroughly disreputable object, like nothing so much as the unsightly collections of rubbish which one often sees gathered about the deserted web of some large garden spider, being just what the builders intended." Then and not till then does the little hen sunbird lay her two greenish white eggs, which she hatches under the shelter of a small porch which has been constructed over the nest, shielding her from sun and rain, and from the prying eyes of any bird of prey which may happen to be overhead.

Another bird of the same family, the flower-pecker, chooses what would seem the odd plan of building close to the red ants' nest, the notice of the inhabitants of which it eludes "in some of those mysterious ways known to birds," whilst their presence is in itself a protection from rats, squirrels, and other foes. The red woodpecker is even more daring, for, wishing to save itself the trouble of burrowing into the dead branches of trees, as does the yellow-fronted variety, it rears its brood in the middle of the red ants' nest. No one has yet discovered how it manages to conciliate these virulent little creatures, but certain it is that in some incomprehensible way it does so.

The tailor-bird has gained its name from its habit of stitching leaves together in order to form its nest, making holes in the edges and passing fibre or, better still, thread (if it can manage to get some from a verandah where a human tailor is at work) backwards and forwards till a neat seam is made. The bird usually selects broad leaves for its purpose, but Mr. E. L. Layard, C.C.S., tells in his "Annals of Natural History" of a nest which was composed of twelve slender oleander leaves drawn together with infinite skill, and the writer possessed one constructed on nearly similar lines, but it was destroyed by the rats, which are the plague of the Ceylon up-country bungalow.

Perhaps none of these nests equal in skill that of the weaver-bird, which is a structure of the most marvellous ingenuity. It is composed of grass or fibre, the best being torn from the leaves of the cocoanut palm, after a long series of notches, on the plan of the perforation of a sheet of stamps, has been made by the bird with great exactitude. The process of weaving is described by



CRAYFISHING: IN THE REED-BEDS.

"E. H. A." in the following words: "The fibres are first wound and twined very securely about the twigs and leaves at the end of the branch, and then plaited into each other to form a stalk or neck several inches in length. As this progresses it is gradually expanded in the form of an inverted wine-glass, or a bell, till it is large enough for the accommodation of a family, and then the mouth of the bell is divided into two equal parts by a strong band woven across it. . . . The hen sits on the cross-band while her mate fetches fibres. He pushes them through to her from the outside and she returns them to him. So they weave, closing up the bell on one side of the cross-band so as to form a little hollow for the eggs, and prolonging the other into a long tunnel or neck. The rim of this neck is never bound or hemmed. It grows thinner and more flimsy to the end, which is frayed out, affording no firm hold to an enemy. The most daring squirrel will not attempt to clamber round it, and get into the nest, especially if there is a well beneath." MARY F. A. TENCH.

THE OTTER AS FISHERMAN.

BY THE LATE C. J. CORNISH.

IT is a great pity that the otter is so nocturnal in its habits, otherwise it would not be credited with "deeds of darkness" to anything like the extent which it is at present, these dark deeds being the murder of trout. In a small artificial pool or made trout-pond, or up a small river in low water, such as prevails in the North in a dry season, they are mischievous in a degree hardly understood. The trout there are easily caught, and the otter "goes for" them with a bloodthirsty perseverance which would do credit to a polecat in a warren. Not so on the large rivers, and larger lakes, where the water is broad and, as in the case of the rivers, swift or deep, where the stream lingers now in a pool, now rushes over rocks. There the trout give them too much trouble to catch, and they seem to confine themselves to eels, and chub, among the fish, while they supplement this by a diet of frogs in season. Fishing along many miles of the Eden and Eamont, in Cumberland, where



C. Reid, Wishaw, N.B.

A LANDING PLACE.

otters abound, I have never come across the remains of a trout or of a salmon eaten by otters. On the other hand, I have often found the scales and bones of chub, which they have taken to the bank to eat. After floods, when smooth spits of pink sand are left by dozens along the river banks, and in the shallows, the otters always select these places to drop their "spraint" upon, placing this on little heaps of sand, carefully scratched up and patted smooth. This very odd habit renders easy examination of what the creatures have been feeding on.



A. Taylor.

ON A POINT OF VANTAGE.

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On the Southern waters frosty weather is the great enemy of the otters, and people who care to kill them have no more difficulty then in doing so than in shooting the water-hens, their associates on the river. When the ponds and rivers are sealed with ice the otters and the water-hens go up the neighbouring ditches, and can easily be found with terriers or spaniels. It is on record that many years ago, when a great frost occurred on the Lower Thames, and the "fleets" in the Essex Marshes were frozen, nine otters were shot in a day by a party who were working the ditches and reed-beds.

Fishing with the otter is by all accounts excellent sport, as might be guessed by anyone who has seen tame otters catching fish in a tank. But few people would care to use them to catch trout, and coarse fish are too useless for the table to be worth the trouble. Yet otters can be trained to fish in the sea, which everyone seems to have forgotten. There is no fear of disturbing the water there, and a boat with a tame otter or two would be a source of endless sport. One James Campbell, who lived in Inverness-shire, is said to have owned a tame otter "which would take eight or ten salmon in a day. If not prevented it would always try to break the salmon behind the fin next to the tail. When one was taken from it it dived for more; and when tired and satisfied with the share of the prey allotted to it, it curled itself round and fell fast asleep, in which state it was generally carried home. The otter fished as well in the sea as in a river, and took great numbers of codlings and other fish. Its food besides fish was milk!"

It will be noticed that there is a great resemblance between the shape of the head of an otter and that of the blunt-nosed eel. The same flatness, the same shape of mouth, and the same position of the eyes on the top of the head are seen in both. If you watch an otter chasing fish you will notice that the former swims rather lower than the latter, and comes up to seize it from below. This lends another advantage to the pursuer, for the fish's eyes are so placed that it does not readily see downwards.

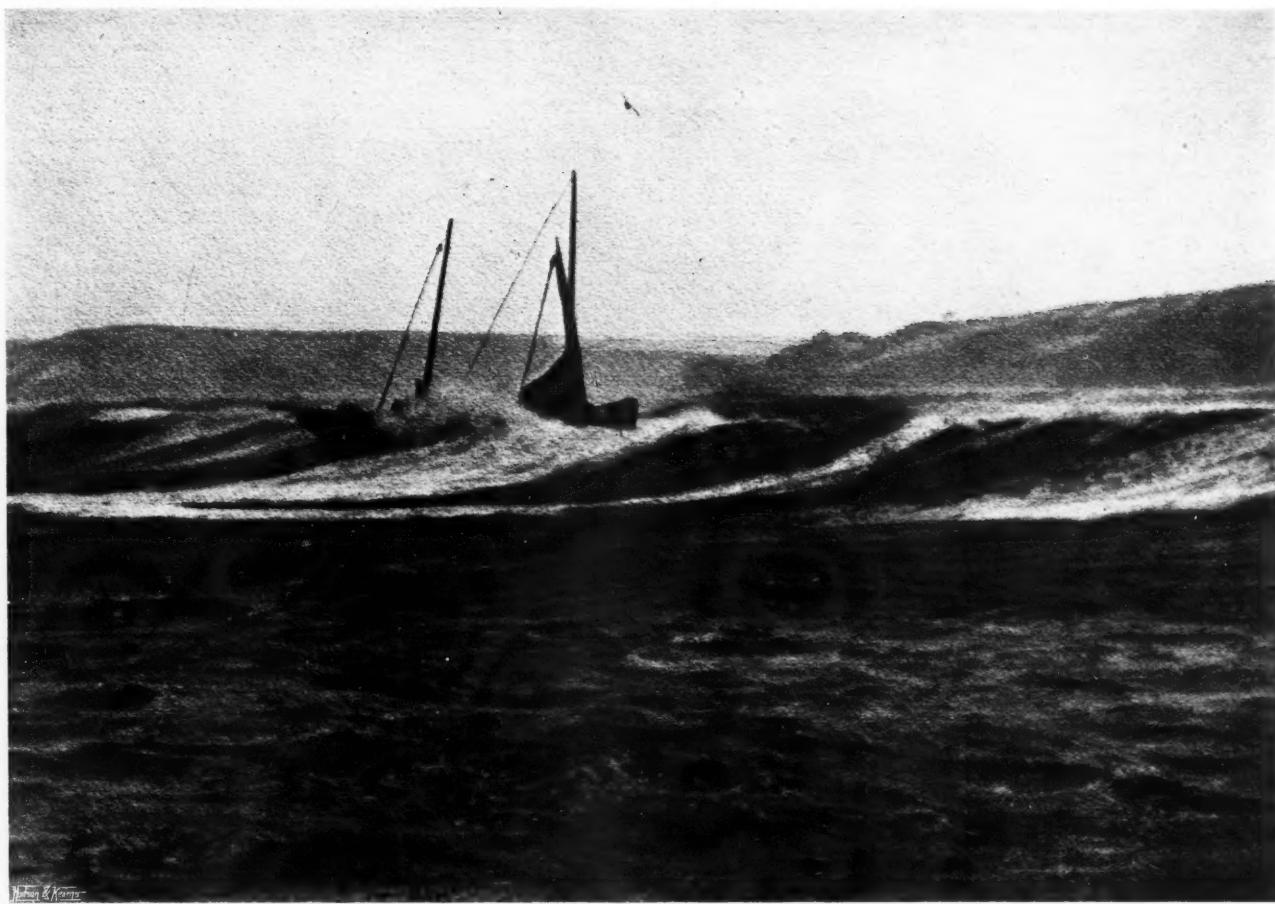


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"STEADFAST AS THE ROCKS."

"COUNTRY LIFE."

IN DEEP PLACES.



C. E. Wanless.

WHEN WAVES RUN MOUNTAINS HIGH.

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IN the Story of the Creation we are told that the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the story goes on to tell us that it was the Creator's command that the waters under the Heaven should be gathered together into one place, and that the dry land should appear. According, then, to this beautiful and wonderful description of the world's creation there was a time—or rather a period before the beginning of time—when this earth, on which we live and move and have our being, was a waste of infinite ocean whose shores were space. And to those who have kept their childlike faith in this first, and, in many ways, most beautiful, chapter of the Book of Wisdom, there seems, in the restlessness and menace of the sea, a desire to regain its lost supremacy, to roll again over the green meadows and pleasant valleys, to plunge into soundless depths the hills and high places, once more to know no shore but space. For these great waters that have acknowledged no control save that of their Creator's hand, are ever taking their toll of the human life that

ventures itself upon their perilous ways, as though jealous of man's existence, and of the dominion of the sons of earth. And it is impossible to put away the thought that in these mighty waters which are never still, there is a sentience, a watchfulness, a voice of "old, far-off, unhappy things." Nature to me has ever been a companion; her deepest silences have voices, her meanest places beauty, and the sea, with its manifold moods, and countless caprices, with its far-off shores, and infinite spaces,

has a charm of mystery and suggestiveness beyond the spoken word and the conscious touch. It is like a great poem that sounds all the depths of human thought and aspiration, yet leaves them soundless; it is like a mighty music which translates the soul to unimagined heights, and leaves it wingless at the threshold of Eternity; it is like a picture which suggests more than the painter is able to express. And perhaps it is our privilege as islanders—who have been born with the sea in our blood, so to speak—that we should be more susceptible to her influence, that we should have a



C. E. Wanless

THE MORNING AFTER THE STORM.

Copyright.

deeper insight into her mysteries, a subtler consciousness of her beauty, a stronger affection for her, than they who inhabit the earth's greatest places. For with all her cruelty, and all her treachery and perilousness, it is love that we feel for the sea, not fear. To us she is always the "great sweet mother," the controller of our destinies, the mistress of our dreams, the guardian-angel of our liberty. And her sons have been men and heroes, and poets and dreamers. She has poured something of her own unconquerable might and strength into the veins of our warriors; she has put the spell of her dreams upon the lips of our singers. For some have heard the call of strange new worlds across her infinite waves, and have set sail towards the sun's uprising, or followed his setting to earth's furthest shore; while others have taken the more perilous voyage of dreams, seeking the fortunate islands and the remote lands of Faëry. And some have found their Eldorado, and some have been shipwrecked with the promised land in view; but the ships of those who have adventured forth in search of the Land of Heart's Desire are derelicts on dark and haunted shores. And this latter idea was impressed on me by one whom I met years ago in one of the islands of the Hebrides. He was a watcher of the moors, a man of middle age, a pale weakly-looking creature, redeemed from insignificance by the fine cast of his brow and an



A. Old.

THE LAST OF A GALLANT SHIP.

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unusual penetration and brilliancy of eye. He was from the mainland, and like so many of his countrymen educated out of all proportion to his appearance. And educated is hardly the word—though he was widely read for a man of his narrow circumstances and limited opportunities—because his thoughts were not taken from books, but were those of an original mind, the dreams of a poet rather than the precisely-formulated ideas of a scholar. But I guessed, from many a conversation held with him, that his thoughts outran

his power of expression, and that this was his quarrel with himself, and with the world, to which he wished to give, but had nothing tangible to offer. He was one of those "mute inglorious" Miltons whose hearts are broken between their own desires and ambitions and the wheel of Destiny. He loved the solitary places, the moors, and hills and lonely lakes, whose silences were the very echo of his thoughts, but his heart's passion was the sea. And the sea along that wild and rocky coast is a thing to stir a duller imagination than that of this lone watcher of the moors. It thunders beneath a thousand cliffs, it creeps a tide of sleep along the sands that mark the outflowing of the larger rivers; it goes out into dream distances; it stretches to far-off hills, that look like clouds along the horizon, mountains of mist shadowy and unsubstantial. Here the cry of the curlew is an insistent



C. E. Wanless.

"FOR MEN MUST WORK."

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C. E. Wanless.

A RISING WIND OFF JURA.

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note of sadness, and the wind a harp of haunting memories touched by the fingers of Silence to a strange sweet melancholy and a fair regret. And it was on these lonely cliffs, or along these haunted shores, that I used to meet the lonely watcher of the moors—a grey and solitary figure that might have stood for the spirit of Loneliness and the shadow of Solitude. And his face was always towards the restless waters, and the far-off shadowy hills, as though he awaited some longed-for sail from distant lands, or one to bear him across the dividing waves to the dim horizons, and the mountains of mist and dreams. And I wondered why it was that he, who was called a watcher of the moors, spent so much of his time by the sea, as though it was

from the sea that he expected the lawless hand to come. And one day he told me, as if he divined the question which I did not like to ask. It was a grey twilight, still and ghostly, and the sea beneath our feet was a moan of weariness; the tide on the turn, creeping in with lagging listless strides, like tired footsteps returning home. Far out there was a gleam upon the waters, a ghost of light, reflected from the pale and phantom sky. And along the shadowy hills there ran a narrow line of gold like the long fair street of the Celestial City. It was towards this glory that my companion looked, and he spoke low and musingly as though to himself. "The Land o' Heart's Desire," he said, "and the ships that men build of dreams." And as he spoke he



B. C. Wickison.

A WRECK OF LONG AGO.

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pointed to a derelict that lay far out at the edge of the incoming tide, a long-time wreck, about whose shattered timbers the waves rose slowly and remorselessly, as though they still gloated over the ruin they had wrought. And he told me that the wreck before us was like that of the dreams with which he had manned a brave vessel, long ago in the morning of his youth, a vessel whose sails were Hope, which he had sent on a far voyage across untraversed seas, seeking a fair country. And this ship had never won to its desire, but—the sport of contrary winds and tides—had been cast up and broken on the rocks of Fate, and the quick-sands of Time. And he told me that this was why the sea had such an attraction for him: because it was a mirror of life with its azure distances and fair horizons, with its promised lands of light and beauty, with its dreary wrecks and haunted derelicts. And when I spoke of the way of dreams as being beyond the oceans of this world with their mocking winds and tides, a voyage into the seas of Silence and the havens of rest, he shook his head; he would not understand that his ship had never really foundered, that her sails were still stretched with favouring winds towards the land of promise, though she would never return with the golden merchandise of his heart's desire. He wanted to fill his hands with the pearls of song and the gold of dreams and scatter them before the world. And I never look on the sea now nor gaze upon a wreck but I think of the watcher of the moors, with his deep sad eyes, and bent and wasted frame, of the dreamer of dreams, who had in his heart the pearl beyond price, yet wotted not of his treasure. And in speaking of the sea, I have struck this minor chord with its note of Celtic melancholy and sadness, because I love the islands of lonely shores and haunted seas that lie towards the North. For over them and their enchanted waters there still lingers a twilight of old unquiet dreams, a grace of fallen beauty, a wan grey gleam of that mysterious light which is named of Faëry.

R. G. T. COVENTRY.

MEMORIES OF COUNTRY LIFE.

YOUTH, they say, is the time for dreams—dreams of the future; but I am old, and as I sit in my easy-chair before a cosy fire I dream, dream of realities gone by, of happy days of youth which, maybe, gather a halo of too unclouded happiness when viewed through the intervening years of strenuous life, disappointments, and hard-won successes. Were there *ever* days like those? Will any other boy ever be so free, so innocently and naturally happy as I was? Is there anywhere to be found a village life to equal the one I lived for ten happy years, or has the city drawn away all the originality and simplicity, and the advent of trams and motors dragged in elements which have rubbed off the bloom and left dissatisfaction in their place, accompanied with the desire and rush for wealth, pleasure, and masterfulness? What times those were in a remote country village in Yorkshire, lying close on the edge of the heather-covered moors, a land of hills covered in summer with grass fields divided by grim stone walls and here and there a clump of stunted trees!

We were a family of six—four boys and two girls—and with my parents, the bachelor vicar and his maiden sister, we formed the circle styled “gentlefolks” by our poorer and hard-working neighbours, who were also our very good friends. These earned their living by hand-loom weaving, or on the poor



Wanless. "THE HERRING LOVES THE MERRY MOONLIGHT." Copyright.

turned with our old nurse, who always accompanied us to guard against our taking the spoonful of rum in our tea, which was regarded as the acme of hospitality. Not being a forbidden luxury to nurse, she generally, after the requisite amount of pressing, followed the prevailing fashion. What games of marbles we played, rounders, leap-frog, tip-cat, cricket, and hopscotch, with the pinafored youths of the village; what trees we climbed, what nests and eggs we took, to the dismay of our more tender-hearted sisters!

Our governess was the vicar's maiden sister, who gave us a solid groundwork of the three R's upon which to build our later education, and our punishments were mostly administered in the good old-fashioned way, without the help of canes or even slippers. Every corner in the old schoolroom and library could tell a tale of dire disgrace, tired legs and monotony, when no greater punishment was needed than to stand in the corner. Our old nurse was quite a character, and at thirty-five seemed to me exactly as she was at eighty-five, both in dress, face, and demeanour generally. Rough, ignorant, and very superstitious, she was absolutely conscientious, honest to the core, and one of the pillars of the house long after we had all grown up. We loved and respected her heartily, and would have fought anyone who dared to disparage her tooth and nail. “To be good,” “to be little gentlemen” was all the religion she taught us, but she taught it by example, for she was by nature a “born lady” herself. Then there was cook, who had lived in the family over forty years, and ruled everyone with a rod of iron; also the gardener, a Methodist who, on the strength of being a local preacher, always wore a white tie; he taught us hymns with rollicking choruses, how to plant our own little store of bulbs, etc., to love the flowers and birds, but, in spite of his often-repeated lesson that God made all things good, could himself “never abide them dratted insects.” All the men and maids were equally our friends, as they had all grown up in our service.

Amidst the villagers I remember the old tailor, who at the day long cross legged on the table in his cottage window. A shrivelled, skinny man of over seventy, with a pair of spectacles miles too large, and a meek old wife who worshipped him, and waited on him hand and foot. We never saw him off his table except on Sundays, and then he appeared in snuff-coloured knicker-breeches, long grey stockings, a swallow-tail coat, and a huge beaver top-hat. He had the reputation of being well off, but a

little farms. We knew every man, woman, and child in the village, attended every wedding, gazed sadly after every funeral train, and watched eagerly at every christening, being profoundly interested in the names of all the new babies. Allowed to wander in and out at our own sweet will (excepting only in school hours and at meal-times), we made friends with old and young alike, and ran no danger of undesirable ones, for, so great was the friendly interest taken in all of us, any such would at once have been criticised and challenged, and a deputation sent to “th maister up at th' hall” to advise his interference. Bad language was seldom ventured on in our hearing, and if inadvertently some word slipped out it was met by a chorus of reproach, and “Ah can yer fashion to say sichlike words afore th' little maisters,” and the delinquent strode off abashed.

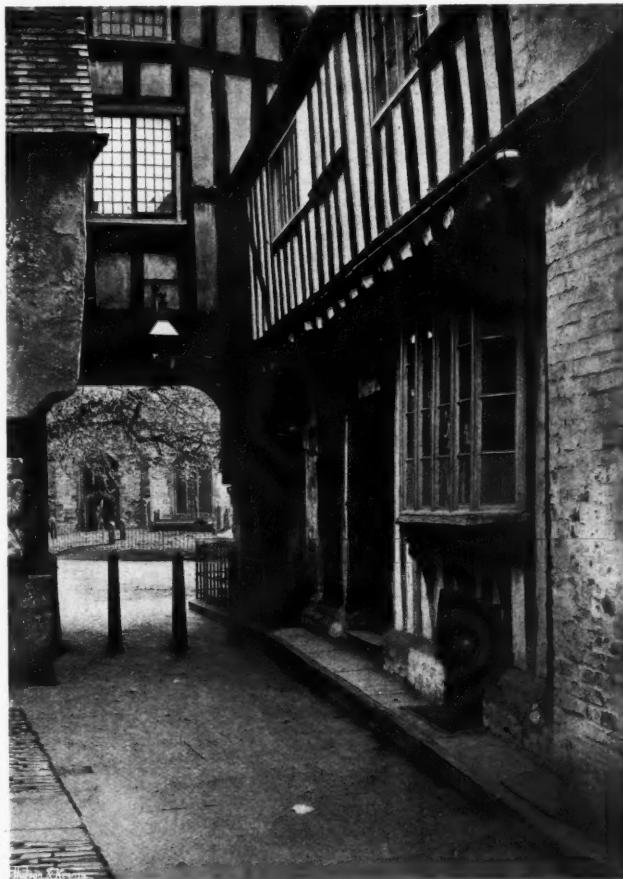
On “baking-day” in the village we knew exactly where to go to get the nicest hot Yorkshire cake, and were often invited to have one buttered and “tak' a sup o' tea,” whereupon we ran home to get the required permission, and, after being washed and put into clean pinafores for the occasion, to show our respect for our humble host and hostess, we re-

miser, and could never be induced to notice the collection plate, even when rattled under his very nose. The church was a damp, musty building, with large cracks in walls and floor, and the pulpit a fearsome-looking three-decker, with a large white plaster dove on the "extinguisher," as my eldest brother called the canopy over the top deck. The old vicar's sermons generally lasted about ten minutes, and as often as not even those nearest were unable to hear his text; but his life among them spoke so eloquently of his Christlikeness that nobody complained, and in those days of sporting and drinking parsons he was reverenced almost as a saint.

The clerk, who led the choir, was a huge man, whose voice had long since cracked. A great friend of ours, and being also the sexton, he allowed us to watch him dig the graves, entertaining us the while with tales of churchyard ghosts, in which he firmly believed. His method of leading the choir was original, but looked upon as "professional," and admired accordingly. He would turn his back on the congregation, put his thumbs under his arm-pits, shut his eyes tightly, and then boom out the first two lines of the hymn, the choir and the rest joining in at line number three. Of music we had none, not even a tuning-fork.

There was Nannie o' Jim's, a witch-like, half-savage old woman who lived on the moor, and came round hawking pots and paus. Her Yorkshire dialect was such that even my mother could hardly understand her; but half-savage as she was, she worshipped the "missus," and gave vent to the most unholy desires for vengeance on anyone who would say anything against "sich an angel wi' sich a fine carcass," her way of alluding to my mother's graceful figure. The village toper and his bosom friend the "dafty" terrified and delighted us at the same time, and in spite of their failings lived to be eighty-six and ninety-one respectively.

The two centres of attraction and importance were "Th' Hall" and "Th' Vicarage," and to the villagers Buckingham Palace and its inhabitants were of small consequence compared with the dwellers in these two houses, who lived amongst them, worked amongst them, and sympathised with them so practically. My somewhat stern father doled out advice, justice, relief, and even medicine to all and sundry, and my gentle but dignified mother "mothered" the whole population, old and young alike. Once a year my parents took a jaunt to relations in London. Their plans were known to the whole village long ere the event came off. Each year heads were shaken, the dangers and length of the journey discussed, efforts made to dissuade them from carrying out such an arduous expedition, and prayers put up for their safe return. Each day during their absence we were made much of, and treated with signs of sympathy as if we were suddenly orphaned, and when the day arrived for their



W. H. Bowman.

IN EVESHAM.

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return the whole population turned out to greet them, special thanksgiving hymns were sung at the next Sunday's service, and gossip says that on one occasion the clerk, in giving thanks, quoted the text "Lord, thou preservest man and beast," the beast on this occasion being presumably my mother! The weekly prayer meetings were marvellous, and we attended them regularly with our Methodist gardener. All holidays were joyfully and strictly kept, and in many ways we had all things in common.

How all the old days come back, and I could dream on for hours, and then only just skim the surface of the genuine healthiness and happiness of our simple country life. As we drifted off to school and college and business it was left behind; but my parents lived and died in it, and the whole village turned out to mourn and accompany them to their last earthly resting-place—the little cemetery outside their much-loved home and estate. The old house still stands, but is in the hands of strangers. Public-houses are at every corner of the village streets, and when I go, as I do but seldom, nobody knows me. Trams rush by filled with men and boys going to work in the factories east and west. I hear rough, even bad, language shouted across the streets. The women at the house doors are dressed in dirty, gaudy blouses and draggled black skirts, shoes down at heel, and dirty aprons instead of the clean washable prints and aprons of the old days.

Have we progressed? Are money-making and wider education everything? In gaining so-called advancement and civilisation have we not paid too high a price? Where is the old courtesy, the genuine respect, the real *personal* interest between employer and employed, between the squire and his tenants, between mistress and maid? Echo answers, "Where!" I am old-fashioned, so they say, and it is time I made room for someone more up-to-date than a dreamy lover of simple country village life.

J. C. A.

OLD-TIME ENTRANCES.

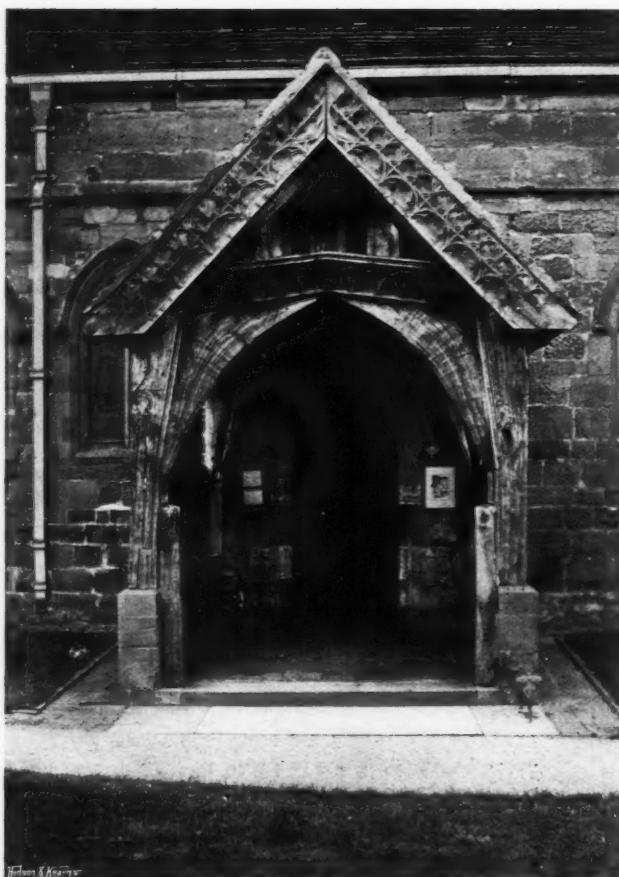


W. H. Bowman.

AT WARWICK.

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HERE are to be found in a number of historical buildings, both in England and Wales, beautiful old doorways and entrances. Whether we inspect a church, a ruined castle, or hall, or an old hospital, the doorway will, in most cases, be found to be the unique feature of the building, both in the literal sense and from an architectural point of view. The accompanying illustrations, with one exception, represent the style of architecture to be found in the Midlands generally. The districts around Stratford-on-Avon and Warwick are especially rich in old-world architecture, and to lovers of it no better district than this could be recommended. The illustrations of the buildings and their styles of architecture are



W. H. Bowman. PLAS MAWR, CONWAY. Copyright.

in all cases, good examples of the period to which they belong.

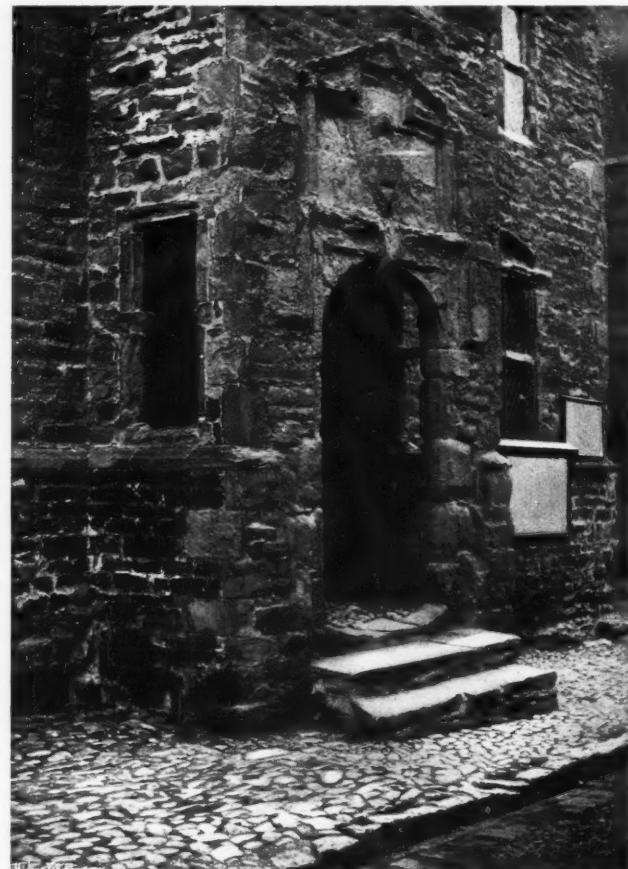
Let us take the old doorway at Kenilworth Castle. This is really the entrance to the Great or Banqueting Hall, a magnificent apartment measuring 90ft. by 45ft., which, although in a ruined condition, still displays, in the tracery of the beautiful windows and ornamentation of the principal doorway, abundant evidence of its former splendour. Overlooking this doorway is Mervyn's Tower, in which Sir Walter Scott places "the apartment, or rather the prison, of the unfortunate Countess of Leicester"—Amy Robsart.

For an old carved oak porch the one at Sheldon, a small Warwickshire church, would be hard to beat. It is well worth a close examination, as the delicate carving is most beautiful and in a rare state of preservation.

Perhaps the most picturesque entrance is the one to Leicester's Hospital, Warwick, which has every appearance of the architecture of an old Flemish town. It is said that there is not a finer or better-preserved specimen of half-timbered architecture in the country. It was founded in 1571 by the Earl of Leicester as a hospital for the accommodation of twelve men, or brethren, together with a master, and this same charity exists at the present time. The building itself is right

over the porch of one of the town's old gateways. Overhanging the arched gateway by which we enter is a picturesque gabled storey, with, below, the inevitable insignia of the bear and the ragged staff, which were the arms of the Earl.

It is but a few miles to Coventry, where we are able to inspect another fine old entrance, that of St. Mary's Hall. It was built late in the fourteenth century for the powerful guilds of Coventry. The great hall contains some fine old painted glass, rare tapestries, and several paintings of the Kings and Queens of England by Lely, Lawrence, and others. In a recess,



W. H. Bowman. SHELDON CHURCH PORCH. Copyright

half hidden by a curtain, is a statue of Lady Godiva. George Eliot, in "Adam Bede," places the trial scene of Hetty Sorrel in St. Mary's Hall.

There is still one other place in the immediate neighbourhood well worth a visit, and that is the old town of Evesham. At the far end of it are the two churches of All Saints and St. Lawrence, in the same churchyard, with a bell-tower separate from each. They are approached from the market-place through an old Norman gateway, shown in an accompanying illustration, which dates back to the twelfth century, and bears the name of Abbot Reginald's Gateway, having been erected by an abbot of that



W. H. Bowman. ENTRANCE: ST. MARY'S HALL, COVENTRY. Copyright

name. The arch, unfortunately, gave place some years ago to the timber-built tenement which now stretches across and covers the arcade, and which is used as the Parish Room. The remains of the gateway, falling rapidly into ruin, have recently been carefully repaired in order to preserve them, as far as possible, in their original condition.

Our last illustration is of the entrance to Plás Mawr, at Conway, and in this reproduction the difference between English and Welsh architecture will be noticed. Various dates, beginning with 1576, are found on the building, but it has been suggested that the original house was much older. For many years it was neglected, until the Royal Cambrian Academy of Art secured it as a picture gallery. It is well worth attention as a remarkably good specimen, in excellent preservation, of a town mansion of the Tudor period. A curious fact is that Plás Mawr has 52 doors, 52 steps up to the tower, and 365 windows.

Old abbeys and churches will not infrequently be found to contain Gothic or Early English arches, which are pointed ones, whilst old castles and ruins of earlier origin have round arches of Norman or Saxon architecture.

W. HOWARD BOWMAN.

THE VOICE OF THE NORTH.

THE scene lies in Siberia, the month is March, and the long, dreary winter is drawing slowly to its close. In temperate lands spring has returned; but here the thermometer still stands at zero, and the bitter wind, laden with whirling snowflakes, howls across the snow-clad tundras. From the Obi to the Irtysh—frozen waterways, where sledges run—a vast expanse of ice-bound marshes meets the eye, and on the banks of the rivers a few scattered tribes of Ostiaks and Samoyedes eke out a scanty living. The bear and the Arctic fox prowl over the dismal wastes; a weird, uncanny silence dwells in the air. Here, strange as it may seem, are the breeding-haunts of myriads of wildowl, whose varied cries awaken the echoes of the desolate “urmans,” as these marshes are called, during the short, but glorious, months of the Siberian summer. Now winter reigns, and all is silent, with the death-like stillness of a land from which all life has long since departed. Clouds of snow obscure the air, and towards nightfall the stars gleam coldly on the sparkling surface like a blaze of jewels in a dusky setting.

On a rugged coastline far to the south the sun rises gorgeously through banks of transparent mist. A gentle breeze ruffles the surface of the sparkling water, in which a few hours ago the moon gazed upon her own image, lit up by her own unearthly radiance. In a sheltered estuary masses of fowl are feeding on the mudflats—thousands upon thousands of widgeon, brent geese, and others of their kind. Though April is now in its third week, these birds have not paired, but for many days have been gathering in huge flocks off the shore. From the fresh-water inland lakes and from the rivers, where the long winter has been spent, from mountain tarns, and from reedy marshes, all manner of wildfowl have come to the rendezvous. Scaup, golden eye, pintail, the long-tailed duck and the eider, scoters and mergansers, pink-footed, white-fronted, bean, barnacle geese—all are here to be seen. A great feast has been in progress during the night—the last night which these fowl would spend in this wild, misty land of plenty. As day breaks, the flocks move out to sea, and a strange, restless movement betokens a coming change. In a tuft of rushes close to a tiny creek a wild duck sits on a clutch of eight greenish eggs, while the drake tends her with loving care.

Small parties of widgeon leave the flocks and circle round their comrades, as though unwilling to leave them, then settle once more on the sunlit waves. The balmy wind drops, and the sea becomes like glass; but the clamour of the fowl re-echoes from the cliffs as the long spring day draws towards its close. The sun sets in a blaze of red, and the cries of the gulls mingle with the strange discord. A hooded crow flaps to his roosting-place, and a black-backed gull, one of the many scavengers of the beach, bears rich spoils home to his mate. The hour of the flight draws near; the fowl are growing restless, and the shrill “Whee-you!” of the widgeon drakes pierces the gloom. The duck rises from the water, flapping their wings as they sit. For a moment silence reigns, till a loud, clangorous note, as of travelling geese, is heard overhead. Through the dusk a V-shaped mass wings its way to the snow-clad North. Some call it instinct, this strange, restless longing which drives the fowl to their Arctic home. Others have it that the North speaks with no uncertain voice, and that the cry of the frozen “urmans,” now fast awaking from their winter sleep, is carried over the many thousand miles which lie between.

A roar of wings rouses the gulls from their slumbers. Something has happened, and well they know the cause of the tumult. The homeward migration has begun, and through the long night the whistling wings of the Arctic wanderers pierce through the darkness. No widgeon will flight inshore to-night—

a longer journey lies before them—the Land of the Midnight Sun is their goal. No more need the farmer scare the geese from his young clover or tender wheat. When day breaks not a migrant is to be seen. The voice of the North has spoken, and the children of the Arctic have obeyed the call.

One night in the middle of April, an Ostiak, sleeping in the shelter of his primitive hut, stirred restlessly, then staggered drowsily to his feet. The air of the hut, situated on the banks of the Obi, became insufferably close, and drove him to the freer atmosphere outside. A loud report echoed through the night, followed by others from the direction of the river. Faint puffs of wind came from the south. Dawn broke, and the cause was plain. The ice was breaking, and already the imprisoned water was trickling through cracks and clefts in the frozen surface. The native grunted with satisfaction, and celebrated the return of spring by devouring a choice morsel of raw flesh, which formed his morning meal.

Three weeks later the balmy winds and sunshine of May have done their work. At night the ice-king resumes his sway, but by slow degrees the grip of the frost is lessened, and the huge blocks of ice borne by the Obi to the frozen sea bear witness to the increasing power of the sun. The river ice is the first to break, and then the long-sealed-up marshes are gradually released from winter's grip. What a change has come over the scene! Where silence reigned supreme the clanging of geese awakens the echoes; the “urmans” teem with water-fowl of all descriptions. On the edge of the swamp a white-fronted goose courts his mate, and in a tuft of rushes close at hand a female widgeon lays another egg as dawn changes into day. A pair of whoopers or whistling swans collect materials for their gigantic nest, a huge structure of coarse grasses and rushes, whereon the female will hatch her brood. Here are the flocks which we last saw on a southern coastline; this was their destination, and here have paired and mated those of them which have survived the hardships and perils of their winter wanderings.

H. B. M.

EASTER FLOWERS.

WETHER it fall early or late, we need not lack fair blossoms to grace the festival of Easter, whose name is due to the fact that Ostera, or Easte, goddess of the spring, was supposed in Northern mythology to return to earth at this season, bringing flowers and sunshine in her train. Long before the Paschal Feast “the violet darkly blue” will have lavished her perfume upon the winds of March. In many districts we may find her modest blossoms as early as February, and if Easter falls towards the end of April these darlings of the spring will probably have faded, leaving the pale, scentless dog-violets to take their place in the hedge-banks, and the wood-violet to display her blue flowers in woods and coppices, where shortly before *Viola odorata*, hiding meekly amid her leaves, betrayed her presence by her exquisite fragrance. Perhaps none of the poets who have extolled the charms of the flower paid her a more graceful tribute than Shakespeare when he wrote:

. . . Violets dim,
But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes
Or Cytherea's breath.

Some commentators have accused him of confusing Juno with Minerva, goddess of blue eyes; others say that the beauties of classic times tinged their lids with a purplish, scented unguent, and that the Bard of Avon was referring to this. The flowers were very highly esteemed by the ancients, not only in “violet-crowned Athens,” but throughout Greece and Rome, as they still are in the East, where they rival the rose in popular favour. Shakespeare mentioned the flowers repeatedly, describing how Marina wished to strew them on her nurse's grave, and making poor Ophelia lament that “they withered all when her father died.” No doubt they were very familiar to him; they grow abundantly in his native county, and at one time were cultivated at Stratford-on-Avon for the purpose of making those old-fashioned remedies for throat and chest complaints, violet syrup, conserve, and sugar.

The blossoms have always been popular with lovers, and were highly esteemed as bridal blossoms in days of yore. Spenser tells of a flock of nymphs gathering flowers “to deck their bridegrooms' posies”:

Of every sort which in that meadow grew
They gathered some; the violet, pallid blue,
The little daisy that at evening closes,
The virgin lily and the primrose true,
With store of vermeil roses.

Violets were also favourite funeral flowers, especially for strewing or planting on the graves of the young and fair. There are many legends explaining the origin of the plant. One says that Ianthea, Diana's nymph, was changed by the goddess into a purple violet to save her from the pursuit of

Apollo; another declares that white violets sprang up as food for Io, after she had been transformed into a cow! Herrick tells us that violets were pure white till Venus, enraged because Cupid said that the flowers excelled her in beauty and sweetness, fell upon them and beat them blue.

Another favourite Easter blossom is the primrose, the

... Ladye of the Springe,
The lovely flower that first doth shew
her face.

It is found, moreover, less abundantly from early March till the beginning of May, though in mild winters the pale sulphur-hued blossoms, which, like those of the rose, violet, and pink, have given a name to a colour, may be found blooming in sheltered spots as early as Christmas. Is there a lovelier sight than a sunny hedge-bank, or a wood in April, when a mass of starry pale yellow flowers carpet the ground, shedding faint sweet fragrance on the air? A six-petalled primrose was at one time used in love-spells:

The primrose, when with six leaves
gotten grace,
Fair maids as "true-loves" in their
bosom place.

Pink, white, and lilac primroses may be found in some parts of our isles. In Cork, where these many-coloured varieties are common, children have an odd idea that if they plant a root of yellow primrose upside-down, it will come up bearing red, white, or lilac flowers! Many old writers allude to the pale hue of the flower—a tint which no other British plant possesses. Perdita mentions:

Pale primroses,
That die unmarried, ere they can behold
Bright Phoebus in his strength,
and again Shakespeare makes Arviragus, believing Fidele, or Imogen, to be dead, promise that he will deck her grave with blossoms while summer lasts:

Thou shalt not lack
The flower that's like thy face, pale
primrose.

Carew, sending "a primrose all bepearled with dew" to his lady-love, bade her regard its weak stem, pallid hue, and dewy tears as emblems of his sorrowful condition:

I must tell you, these discover
What doubts and fears are in a lover;

while homely Clare bids welcome to "the pale primrose." An allied flower, the brighter-hued yellow cowslip, is another of the plants we may find to deck our churches or homes on "the dancing Easter Day," when, according to an old superstition still current in Ireland, the sun at his rising dances in the skies. Many a peasant "colleen" steals out before dawn through the dewy fields, where the cowslips nod on their slender stems, and the "faint sweet cuckoo-flowers," dedicated long ago to the Blessed Virgin, display their lilac petals, believing that if her eyes can see the wonderful "sun-dance," the dearest wish of her heart will be granted. The cowslip was transferred in the Middle Ages to the Virgin as well as to St. Peter. The connection with the former was because Norse and Teutonic myths associated it with Freia, the "Key-Lady," who bore the magic key of spring in her crown, or with Hulda, or Holde, and Berchtha, into whose enchanted palace admission is gained by means of the golden key-flower. When the belief in Hulda and Freia died out, pious folks in Germany regarded the blossom as Our Lady's Key. In our own isles the plant was more frequently connected with St. Peter, because the fancied resemblance to a bunch of keys caused the cowslip to be regarded as an emblem



J. M. Whithead.

STAR DAFFODILS.

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Another favourite plant with little people is in bloom at this season—the curious wild arum, or Cuckoo-pint, whose childlike name is Lords and Ladies. The inflorescence is most peculiar; the odd, club-shaped spadix, enclosed in its pale green sheath, is sometimes red or reddish purple, and sometimes pale yellow in hue. When the club is dark coloured, children call it a lord; the pale-tinted one is a lady. In a few districts these names are varied to Adam and Eve, and in Sussex, probably because of its acrid and poisonous qualities, the plant is known as Devil's Men and Women; but in this county it has another odd appellation—Cows and Calves.

No account of seasonable blossoms would be complete without a mention of the lovely

Daffodils,
That come before the swallow dares, and take
The winds of March with beauty.

The golden flowers will deck many churches on God's sundae, as old writers called Easter, and hosts of merry daffy-down-dillies will dance in the spring sunlight in many a field throughout the British Isles all through Lent, which has given them the titles of Lent roses, Lent lilies, and Lent ball flowers. They have many other names, king spear, trumpet flower, chalice flower, and the ancient yellow crowbell, Quarles's gilt bowl daffodilly, Marvell's darling daffodils. What poet has failed to celebrate the bright-hued flowers, which some identify with the

of the keeper of the heavenly gate; hence it was called Herb Peter and St. Peter's Flower, one legend telling how the Saint once dropped his golden keys, which fell to the earth, and where they touched the ground the pretty Keys of Heaven sprang up! Very probably it was this connection with St. Peter that made the old herbalists deem the plant efficacious as a remedy for palsy, a fact to which it owed its former title of palsy wort—a title which lingers in some parts of England. The common paigle is probably a corruption of this. In Essex, where the golden flowers are very abundant in the fields, they are known as peggles and cow-peggles—very unromantic titles! Far prettier is the name of fairy-cups, for the yellow Titania's Pensioners have long been associated with the stories concerning "the good people."

Many superstitions were connected with the ruddy spots that lie in their sweet cups:

In their gold coats spots you see;
These be rubies, fairy favours,
In those freckles live their savours.

Dobell spoke of the flower wearing "rubies in her hair," and Hurdis told of

The love-sick cowslip that her head inclines
To hide a bleeding heart.

As the bright petals were thus "cinque spotted" with ruddy freckles, the village beauties of former days regarded them as a sovereign cure for all kinds of spots on the skin. Parkinson tells us how "divers gentlewomen knew how to cleanse the skinne from spots or discolorings, as also to take away the wrinkles thereof, and cause the skinne to become smooth and faire by the use of the juice or water of the flower." "Cowslip water" is no longer to be had, but a few country-folks still make excellent cowslip wine and cowslip tea, and children weave the bright-hued blossoms into the fragrant cowslip balls known as sweet-tosses and tisty-tosties.

yellow asphodels of classic writers, while others, again, maintain that it is a corruption of Dis's lily, the wonderful narcissus which Persephone was gathering on the plains of Enna when she was borne away by the gloomy god.

MAUD E. SARGENT.

IN THE GARDEN.

THE BLUE HARDY PRIMROSE.

WE were looking over a series of blue hardy Primroses the other day from Messrs. Sutton and Sons' seed, and admired the remarkable purity of the tones, which ranged from a true violet-blue to a clear forget-me-not colour, with very few, if any, unpleasant ultramarine and magenta shades. The blue Primrose has undergone a vast change during the past few years. We well remember the varieties raised by the late Mr. G. F. Wilson in Wisley garden, Oakwood Blue and Scott Wilson being two of the finest of the named sorts; but these will be found now in a packet of seed. They were, however, the pioneers of this fascinating break-away in Primrose colouring, and we owe much to the late Mr. Wilson for his cleverness and patience in bringing this colour into existence. One point which must be insisted upon is that home seed should be sown every year, for the good reason that after a life of three or four years, sometimes even shorter, the plants revert back perhaps to a crimson or a pink, and entirely lose the blue tones. We noticed this in the batch referred to, one plant having gone back to a crimson colour, the year after flowering as a blue Primrose. Primroses are very easily raised from seed, so that it is not an arduous task to maintain the distinctive colouring. Sow the seed early in summer in a box of ordinary soil, which should be placed in a frame or in a prepared piece of ground in the open. When the seedlings are of a sufficient size to handle prick them out, and then transfer them to the place in which they are to flower. The blue Primrose, in particular, requires a shady place. All Primroses enjoy shade, but the blue colours lose their fresh beauty when in full exposure to the sun. Mr. Wilson planted them by the side of a shady ditch, and against mossy stones, which brought out in full relief the warm distinctive colourings.

PRUNING THE FORSYTHIAS.

At this time our gardens owe much to the beautiful Forsythias for their spring beauty. The Forsythia is a joyous half climber and half shrub, and flings its golden flowers about in a way which seems to usher in the springtime of the year, when as yet few shrubs are even in leaf. *F. suspensa* is the brightest of the three kinds generally grown. It is the most rampant, and will throw its long, wiry flower-laden shoots over even a rough hedge, and to see it tumbling down a rough bank is something to remember. It grows with great rapidity, but we advise that it be placed in the rougher part of the garden, where its untidiness during the summer is unobserved. The real object of this note is to direct attention to the pruning of the Forsythias, which are generally in sad want of this attention. Prune as soon as possible after the flowering is over. Spur back the wood formed last year to within a few eyes of the old wood, and then a perfect storm of flowers will greet you

each year. The other Forsythias should be pruned in the same way, in spite of the difference in growth. *F. viridissima* and *F. intermedia* are quite bushes and stiff in growth; the flowers are bright yellow, and appear a little later than those of *F. suspensa*.

HEALTHFULNESS OF THE UNHEATED GREENHOUSE.

In some notes published recently in a contemporary on the usefulness of the indoor greenhouse, it is mentioned that such a house is of the utmost benefit to delicate persons. "There are hundreds of delicate people who dare not venture to stand about out of doors on a chill autumn or winter's day to superintend garden operations, who yet, of all recreations, best enjoy the tending and environment of plants. The relaxing heat of a stove is equally insupportable for any length of time, and abrupt transitions from the moist warmth, even of an intermediate house, into the freezing outer air, or a sudden grappling with a keen easterly blast, is more than even the strongest can stand without risk. It is no small boon, then, on a dreary winter's day, to have a place of shelter, neither too cold nor too hot, and a possible occupation where an hour or two may be safely spent in the company of the plants we love. It is a melancholy fact that the glass-house, seen from outside as a garden adjunct, is not itself, in an artistic sense, a thing of beauty. It is even worse than a mere negative, and sometimes becomes a positive eyesore. All the more reason, therefore, that the inner aspect should atone for the outer, that when we enter it we may be tempted by a genial atmosphere to linger long to enjoy the loveliness of leaf and flower, without a vague dread of an evil genius of bronchitis or rheumatism hovering about us with shadowing wing. If we have the true gardening spirit there will always be some work to do, some new interest to discover. Outside, the rain may patter on the glass, or the bare boughs toss in the whistling wind, and only the pale Hellebore, or, perhaps, a belated China Rose ventures to brave the inclement season before the Snowdrops come; but, within, while we run no risks, we may have greenery and tender spring tints and scents of early Hyacinth and Iris, of Violet and Crocus, and a host of flowers which only ask the gentle coaxing of a little shelter to bless us for our courtesy by stealing, with innocent guile, a few hours from the 'winter of our discontent.'"

CINERARIAS AT FARNHAM ROYAL.

Once again the Cineraria flower is holding high festival in Messrs. James and Son's nursery at Farnham Royal, and a richer feast of colour it is not possible to rival at this season of the year. Several houses are filled with the plants, and one is devoted to the graceful *Stellata* strain, or the star-shaped Cinerarias, of which the firm has a dainty selection. The little flowers crowd on the slender stems, and make a cloud of soft and sometimes intense colouring—here a film of sky blue, there intense purples, and in another corner a mass of snow white. But it is the dwarf strain that gives the colour. The purples are intense, and from these one passes to flowers with a white centre, then a pure rose, snow white, or some shade of magenta; and we have never seen the plants better grown or the colours purer in their various shades than this year. The Cineraria is a cheery greenhouse flower, and we hope it will be more largely grown in the future than in the past. A blaze of colour under glass in the dreary weather of March is a positive relief. One steps from a garden swept by piercing winds into a bath of floral sunshine.



Mrs. Turnbull.

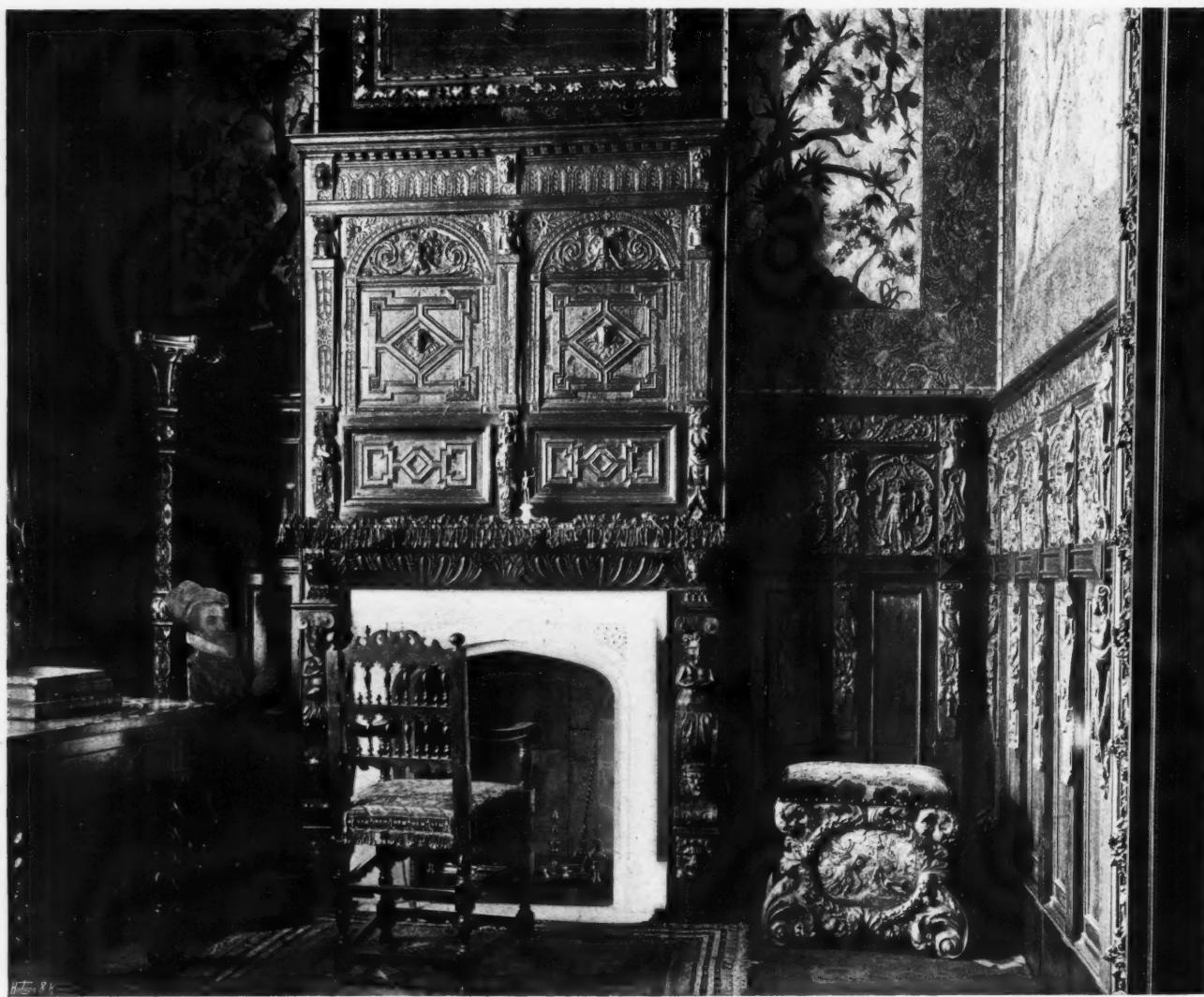
A SNOWDROP GARDEN.

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KNEBWORTH is mentioned in the Domesday Survey, under the title of *Chenepeworde*, as belonging to Eudo the Steward (Dapifer), to whom it had been granted at the Conquest by William I. It first came into the possession of the Lytton family in the time of King Henry VII., when Sir Robert de Lytton bought the property from Sir Thomas Bourchier. For many years it passed from father to son in direct succession; but in the reign of Queen Anne the male line of the family came to an end, and Sir William Lytton, who died in 1705, left the property to his great-nephew, Mr. Strode, who in turn was succeeded by his cousin, Mr. Robinson Norreys. The daughter and heir of this gentleman married a Mr. Warburton, and their son was again succeeded by a daughter, who married Mr. Bulwer. In each case, however, the heir through the female line took the name of Lytton on succeeding to the property. Mr. Strode became Strode-Lytton, Mr. Robinson Robinson-Lytton, Mr. Warburton Warburton-Lytton, and finally Mr. Bulwer Bulwer-Lytton. The family name has thus been preserved, and, in spite of many failures in the direct line of succession, Knebworth still remains the property of the Lyttons.

The family pride of Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton (a weakness which he was not ashamed to acknowledge) has preserved in the decorations of the house, for which he is responsible, an ample record of the various branches of the family. Their coats of arms are blazoned forth on ceilings, walls, and floors, stained-glass windows are inscribed with their names and mottoes, and round the top of the large dining-hall hang banners bearing the names of the Kings whom they served, or the battle-fields on which they fought. This hall is a fine room, with a carved oak screen and raised music gallery. The chimney-piece and wainscot framing were added in the reign of Charles I. from a design by Inigo Jones. The figures to right and left of the fireplace are in armour of the reigns of Henry VII. and Henry VIII. respectively. From the centre of the music gallery hangs a large banner, which was presented to the late Earl of Lytton by Queen Victoria, in commemoration of the Delhi Durbar of 1877, at which he proclaimed her Empress of India. Beyond the hall is the oak drawing-room, containing a number of family portraits and a cabinet with some interesting miniatures and historical curiosities. Amongst these are a silver cross given by Mary Queen of Scots on the scaffold to one of her ladies; snuff-boxes

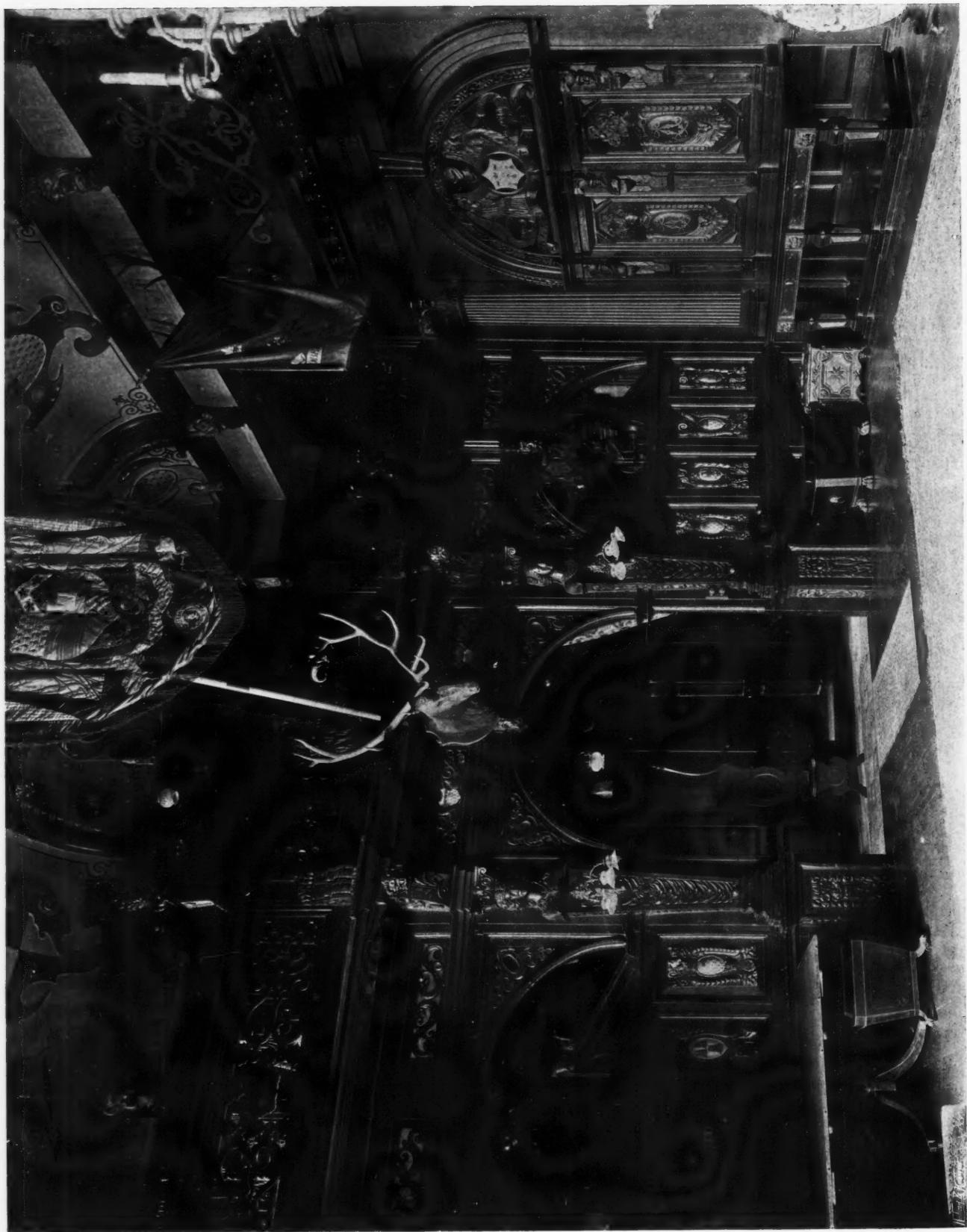


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ANTE-ROOM OF SALOON.

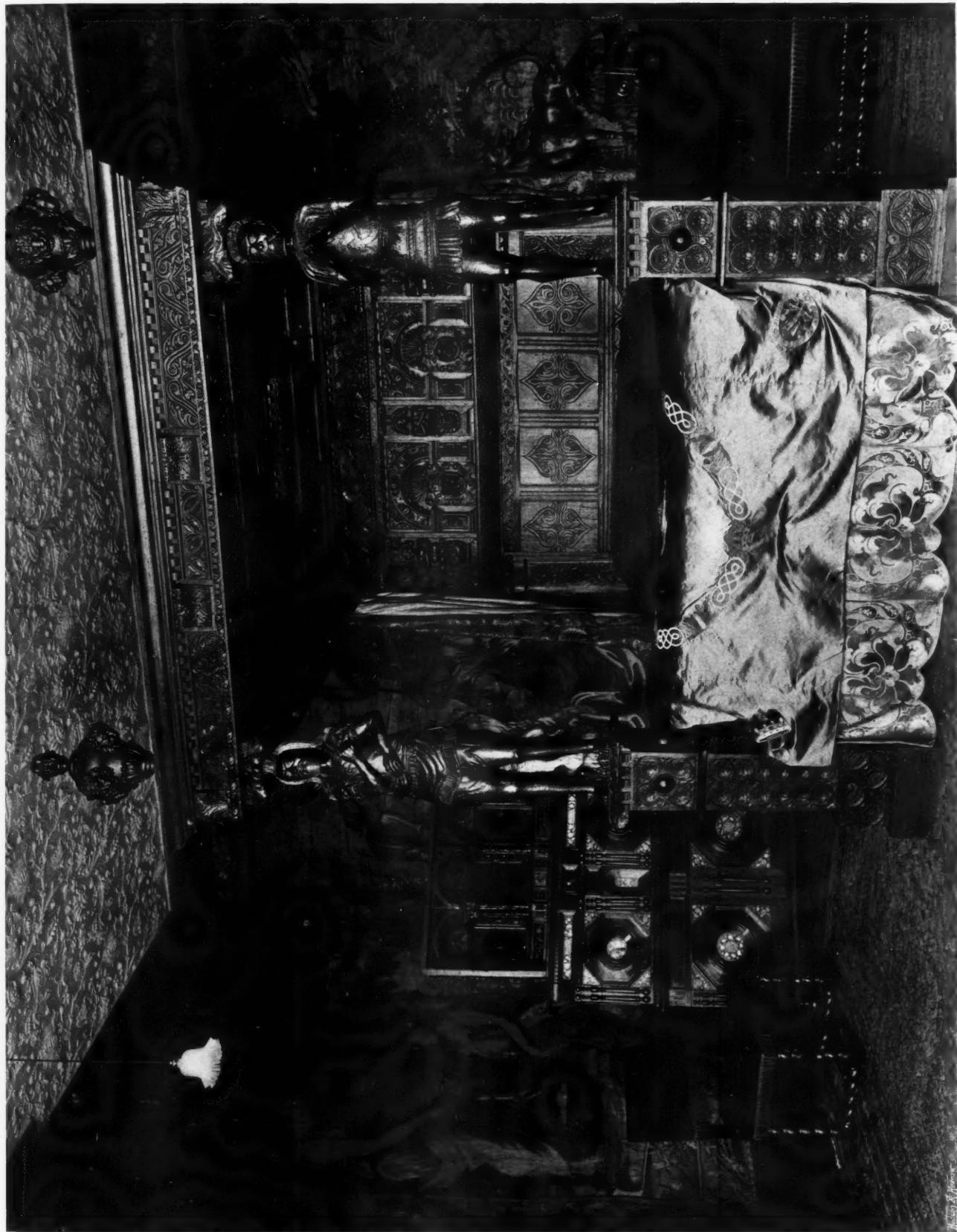
"COUNTRY LIFE."





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THE HALL SCREEN.



QUEEN ELIZABETH'S ROOM.

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which belonged to Pitt and Fox; and a ruler which belonged to Lord Byron. This is the room in which the leaders of the Long Parliament—Hampden, Eliot, and Pym—were entertained by Sir William Lytton. A fine carved oak door leads into the library. Most of the books in this room belonged to Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton, and were collected by him during his lifetime. Two other libraries, belonging to an earlier date, had formerly existed at Knebworth, but have not survived. The first had been bequeathed away from the family by the widow of the last Mr. Robinson-Lytton. The second had been collected by the eminent scholar Mr. Richard Warburton-Lytton, mentioned in the last article, but was sold after his death to pay off his debts. Sir Edward has described in his autobiography the rapture with which, as a child, he pored

over these books of his grandfather during the few months in which they lodged at his mother's house in London. "Many of these books," he said, "were in strange tongues which excited in me a deep and wistful reverence. They seemed filled with weird hieroglyphics and unearthly characters. But at length I fell upon others which I could understand: a race with which I had common speech. In the collection were numerous works upon knight-errantry, witchcraft, and faery-land. Of these the one which specially caught my fancy was 'Amadis of Gaul,' in Southey's translation. There was much in it, no doubt, that I could not understand; but perhaps the very dimness of my comprehension increased the charm of it. Never can I forget the hours of rapt and intense enjoyment passed in what then seemed to me the large London parlour, gloating over the wild





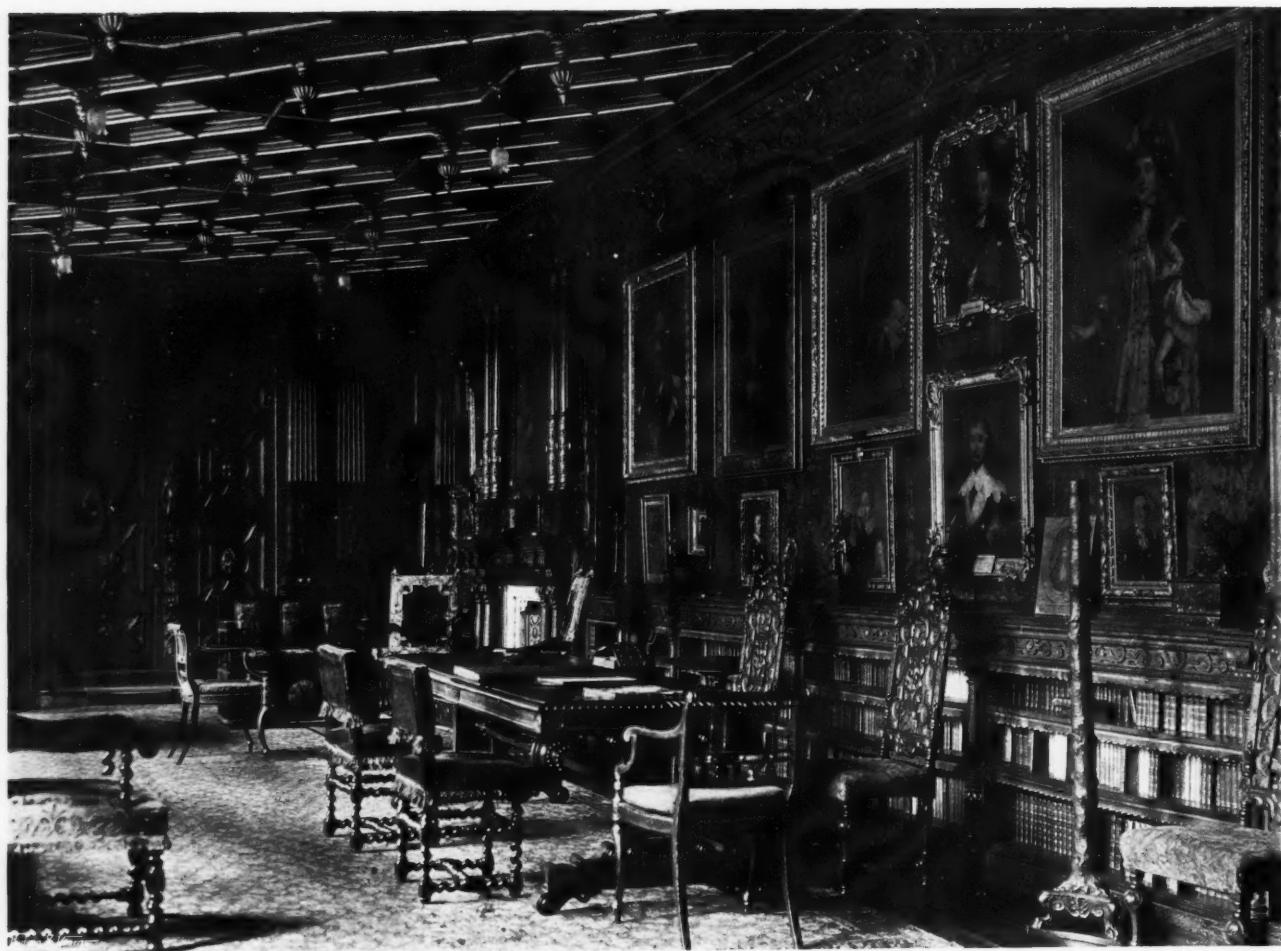
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IN THE QUEEN'S BEDROOM.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

feats and perilous adventures of this fabulous hero. That life in my grandfather's library was but as a vision of Khubla Khan—a glimpse of fountain and pillar, palm-tree and purple, that came and went. But what came with it went not with it also away. That yearning of the soul for something beyond the range of the senses—that escape into the Inmaterial which we call the Desire of Knowledge—books thus created in me: but it did not with me, as with my grandfather, seek nurture and refreshment from books alone. Circumstance, that leaves the master desire undiminished, modifies its form and varies its ends. To me knowledge has come somewhat from books, but far more from the hearts of men. To unravel motive, to analyse the passions and affections, searching out the hidden springs of

human conduct, and the remote sources of human character, these have been the aims which, pursued, it may be, with success or effort wholly vain, have at least rendered attractive to myself the paths of action as well as study, by connecting both study and action with an interest, a curiosity, an allurement, reaching far beyond the scope of either." In addition to the books in the present library there are others of considerable interest, especially those on magic and witchcraft, which were collected by Sir Edward towards the end of his life. These are to be found in the long picture gallery which faces the library on the other side of the main staircase. This gallery was originally the kitchen and offices of the old house. It contains some interesting pictures and furniture, also two bronze pillars with lamps which were dug



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ANTE-ROOMS OF THE GREAT DRAWING-ROOM.

"COUNTRY LIFE"

up in a garden belonging to Joan Queen of Naples, and must be at least 2,000 years old. On the first floor, over the library and oak drawing-room, is a suite of three rooms, a large drawing-room, and two small ante-rooms, which formed part of the long gallery hung with tapestry in the old house. The larger room contains some fine furniture, and on its walls hangs a portrait of Colonel Sir William Robinson Norreys, whose descendants afterwards took the name of Lytton, and became the owners of Knebworth. The following adventure is recorded of this gentleman, who, in the days of the Civil War, was a staunch Cavalier, and fought for King Charles at the time when the then head of the Lytton family was championing the cause of Parliament. In making his escape after the battle of Marston Moor, hotly pursued by the Roundheads, he arrived at his own home, upon which some workmen were employed in carrying out alterations. He had barely time to dismount from his horse, which was carried away and concealed, borrow the dress of one of his labourers, and set to work with the rest, when the Roundheads came up. The workmen, though pressed with threats and bribes for information of the fugitive, remained true to their master, who thus escaped the terrible penalty of being "hanged on the old oak before his own door."

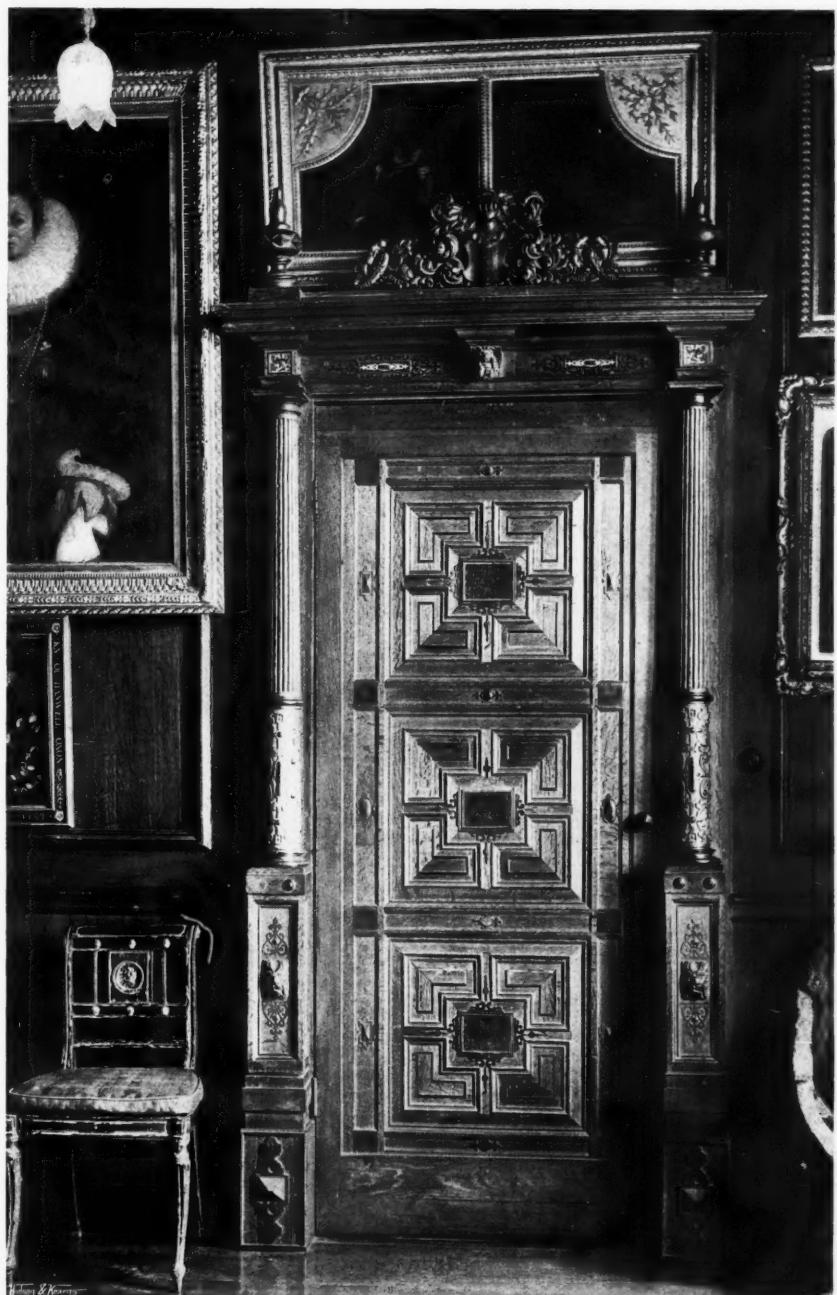
On the landing outside this room is a picture of the Robinson Lyttons at a later date. Another anecdote is told of the persons seen in this picture, which shows that the family still remained true to their political faith. When Charles Edward crossed the border, the William Robinson Lytton of the day determined to go to his support. After many vain expostulations, his wife (the lady in the centre of the picture) followed him to the stables, where his horse stood saddled for the journey; and as soon as he had entered to see to his horse she turned the key upon him, and kept him imprisoned for two days, until news came that the Stuart cause was lost and the Pretender had retreated.

In one of the small ante-rooms is some very fine bead tapestry, said to have been brought from the palace of the Medici at Florence. A picture painted by E. M. Ward, R.A., which now hangs upon the staircase, represents Sir Edward at work in this room, with one of the long cherry-tube pipes which he used to smoke. The staircase to the left leads to the Tudor corridor, with a suite of bedrooms. The most interesting of these is the room in which Queen Elizabeth is said to have slept in the year of the Spanish Armada. The bedstead and general character of the room are Elizabethan, but only a small portion of the tapestry near the bed has survived from that period. The rest is more recent, and comes from Beauvais. Opposite this room is one which is dedicated to the memory of Mrs. Bulwer, the masterful old lady who destroyed the home of her ancestors and imposed her will upon the whole parish for so many years. The story is still told in the village of her quarrel with the

parson; how she vowed that she would never enter his church until she was carried there feet foremost; how she not only kept that promise herself, but forbade every other inhabitant of the village to set foot inside the church on pain of incurring her displeasure; how having planted trees round it to hide it from her view, she herself conducted the service regularly every Sunday in her own drawing-room to a large congregation, while the parson and the parish clerk were left to say their prayers to each other; and how, finally, the interdict was only removed by her death, when her coffin was carried by her tenants feet foremost through the western door and up the aisle of the church which she had refused to enter alive. Even so, her bones were not allowed to rest there, but were placed in a family mausoleum which she had erected in the park during her lifetime. It is also recorded that in her younger days she used to drive through the village with her mother, while the latter threw sweetmeats to the children to make them cheer her, so much did she love the sound of their voices. The mantel-piece of the room in which Mrs. Bulwer lived and died now bears an inscription placed there by her son, which charges posterity to preserve it for ever in all its essential features exactly as she left it. The room contains several portraits of her family, including those of her son, Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton, as a child, and her two grandchildren, Edward Robert (afterwards first Earl of Lytton) and his sister Emily.

In this account of Knebworth, only mention has been made of such features as seemed to possess special artistic or historical interest. It is therefore in many respects necessarily incomplete. No bare description of a place, or a summary of its history, can convey any idea of the crowded memories and stirring emotions which its very name calls up in the minds of those to whom that name means home. Every house which has stood for many generations becomes at last a monument of the family which has owned it, and with the changing fortunes and personal history of that family much of its interest is inseparably bound up. In the case

of Knebworth these personal associations belong chiefly to comparatively recent years. By the destruction of three parts of it, and the complete alteration of the fourth, the chain of events which connected the house with its owners was rudely broken. There is little about the place to-day which recalls the early Lytton ancestors, or the later Robinsons, or even the old scholar Richard Warburton; but every feature of the present building is expressive of the last two generations who lived in it. Just as Abbotsford, with all its architectural faults, is still visited with a kind of reverence by the admirers of Sir Walter Scott, so will Knebworth always possess a special interest, and even a special charm, for those who have found pleasure in the novels of Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton, or the poetry of Owen Meredith.



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IN THE OAK DRAWING-ROOM.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

A SALMON RIVER IN ICELAND.

SO much has been written in recent years concerning Iceland, of its inhabitants past and present, that the average reader has been satiated with its ancient romances or descriptions of the island's attractions for the traveller. To-day, therefore, little remains to be said which could, with any degree of justice, lay claim to the charm of novelty. Strange indeed, in spite of this, is the fact that there are yet in England numbers, even amongst our sporting brethren, who still retain somewhat grotesque ideas regarding the climatic and other conditions existing in that Northern island. For some reason, which is probably owing to its isolated position on the map, casual observers form exaggerated opinions concerning the inaccessibility of a land which may now be reached in comparative comfort, and in less than four days, by sea from Leith to Reykjavik. It is somewhat remarkable that the island is so little frequented by anglers who wander in quest of sport, since the rivers are numerous and fish plentiful there; but this may possibly be attributed to the highly-embellished tales of the voracious flies encountered, and weird superstitions held by some sportsmen regarding the probabilities of fishing rivers covered with perennial snow. The latter problem is a fallacy, although there is decidedly a stern reality pertaining to the former which renders fishing on certain Icelandic rivers a pursuit of pleasure under difficulties. Speaking, however, from personal experiences of both countries, the writer has no hesitation in saying that, even when present in goodly

fell victims to the party of four rods on it. The river itself possesses certain characteristics which render it unique in the recollections of one who has had a somewhat varied experience amongst the salmon rivers in Europe and America. On this account, therefore, it may be worthy of a short description. Being small in size, it contains no pools which cannot be covered by casting from one bank or the other, although to suit the taste of an individual, here and there one may have recourse to a little wading, this being rendered easy owing to the shallowness and uniform depth of the stream. In length, the best fishing water extends for a matter of some six miles from the mouth to a point some distance below where the river issues from a big lake. The difference between the upper and lower portions of the water is very marked. On first sight the lower reaches present visions of boundless possibilities for determined struggles with game fish. For here the river comes rushing down its rock-strewn bed in long successions of rapids interspersed by sporting little pools, with ever and anon small fosses lending variety to the scene. Numerous wicked-looking rocks standing far out of the water, which hurls itself against them in the rapids, conjure up spectres of anxious anglers racing from pool to pool in frantic efforts to prevent their line fouling as the fish fight their way down rapids. But alas for dreams, salmon seem to instinctively know that negotiating a rapid when hooked means the fate of drowning ere they reach a harbour of refuge in the pool below. Consequently these fish prefer to end their days



WADING BELOW A FOSS.

numbers, the black flies of Iceland are mere children in comparison with the attacks of their closely-allied species which are encountered in North America, and are locally known there by the names of moose flies or "grey stockings." Moreover, there are certain rivers on the island where the black fly is practically an unknown quantity. On such a river, through the courtesy of a friend, was the lot of the writer cast for several weeks during the past season.

It is pleasant in these highly-civilised days, when rapid locomotion makes our world so small, for the traveller to find yet one corner which allures him with the charm of pastures new. What matters it that these pastures consist of scanty patches on which the grass struggles for existence throughout the long, dark winters; where the thin upper coating of soil affords bare foothold for the roots, beneath which, and ever out-cropping on the surface, lie miles upon miles of rocks strewn on the hillsides, or valleys deep crusted with lava deposited there in centuries past by numbers of now extinct volcanoes; where, also, trees are unknown, whilst the endless panorama of bare rocks or barren hillsides is backed in the far distance by views of rugged, desolate mountains, all lending an air of sadness to Nature. It is here that the wanderer may recall similar scenes on which he has gazed, across the far-off illimitless spaces, in barren lands of great continents, where the known and unknown merge in desolate arctic regions.

But have we not, in the midst of this wilderness, a river positively teeming with salmon and sea-trout, a river which even during the past notoriously bad year has outclassed any other in Europe of similar extent as regards the number of fish which

after a few short rushes in the pool where they are hooked. Turning to the upper reaches, we find a long stretch of deeper water, flowing sluggishly and placidly, in vast contrast to the turbulent stream below. Here, owing to the action of the lake above, which acts in the nature of a filter, the pellucid waters call for tiny flies and the finest of casts. Neither of these appliances on this river should be considered a disadvantage, having regard to the fact that they offer fish extra facilities for showing a good fight; advantages of which, alas, once more they fail to avail themselves, since when hooked in the upper pools they seem imbued with the spirit of the waters and fight sluggishly, thus reminding us more of a pike in English waters rather than the true *Salmo salar* as we have seen him in his element on the Northern rivers. Again, on these upper reaches we miss something. Owing to the lack of current the fly of necessity works deep in the water. In consequence the majority of fish take lazily deep down, without that sudden rush and silvery flash of a clean run salmon as he hurls himself at the fly in fast waters, a sight which seldom fails to send a momentary thrill through the heart of most of us, no matter how often we have seen it before.

The most remarkable characteristic of the river, as regards its cause and effect, is as follows: About a mile from the sea the river bifurcates, and enters the fjord by two mouths, situated only a few yards distant from each other. Just below the junction of the two rivers one of them falls over a high foss, which is impassable for salmon. It may be stated *en passant* that to blast this foss, or to construct a pass over it, would be no very arduous task, and it would vastly improve the river. Great

numbers of fish ascend this branch of the river early in the season, and get packed in the pool below the falls. Here they will seldom look at any form of lure, but present an extraordinary spectacle when viewed from high rocks above the pool. Countless numbers may be seen swimming slowly round the pool, many repeatedly hurling themselves in vain against the falls, only to be hurled back again into the pool below. Finally, when scarred and worn in their fruitless efforts to battle with the falls, numbers of them return to the sea, shortly afterwards

to ascend once more either of the two river mouths. By one of these only can they arrive at the upper reaches, but in both rivers throughout the season one is confronted with the unusual sight of fish-bearing sea lice on them—which are as red as foxes and as poor as crows. To convey some idea of the general appearance of such fish, it may here be stated that the present writer took, early in August on the fly, a cock fish which measured 36½ in. in length by 16¼ in. girth, and weighing only 14½ lb. Such proportions and weight seem somewhat extraordinary to one who is accustomed to see fish of this length scaling from 28 lb. to 30 lb. As a general rule even the fresh-run fish on this river are very far below the standard of measurements and weights which constitute what, in British or Scandinavian rivers, would be called a well-shaped fish. In the case of the largest number of them when measured, the girth measurement is considerably below one half the length of a fish, and this may to some considerable extent account for their poor qualities as fighters when hooked. These remarks do not apply to every fish in the river, since occasionally one is killed which, as regards shape and appearance, would do credit to any river. The local gillies on landing such a fish usually exclaim that it really belongs to some other river on the island, where the usual type of fish is similar to this one. Fish do not run large here, one of 15 lb.

being exceptional, and 17 lb. about the record.

Having hitherto taken a somewhat sombre view of the river and its attractions, let us turn for a moment to a brighter side of the picture. It may safely be claimed that the average yield of fish per rod far exceeds in numbers that made on any other river in Europe to-day. A blank day there is almost an unknown event, save on rare occasions under the most impossible conditions of bright sun or rising water. In favourable circumstances fish take the fly freely, and, *horresco referens*, they have a strong predilection

for the homely worm, or so-called "garden fly," under almost all conditions of wind or weather. The angler who takes any interest in this form of fishing, if he cares to work hard on a good day with the "garden fly," can make a surprising bag of fish. In a good season fish are daily running up fresh, and the run lasts a considerable time. During such a year, according to accounts of local gaffers, fish lie behind every available stone which forms a holding-place, and are crowded in every pool. Such was not quite the case in 1905, which was stated by the gillies to be one of the worst seasons on record during recent years as regards the number of fish in the river. Suffice it, however, that the bag made during the past season by a party of four rods, fishing from June till the end of August, was no less than 1,316 salmon and grilse, weighing 6,210 lb., also 826 sea-trout, weighing 1,003 lb., besides numerous brown trout, and a few etceteras, such as char and bull trout. On one occasion two rods bagged 50 salmon and grilse in the day, and this bag has been exceeded by the same number of rods in a previous good season. The grand total is only remarkable for its numbers, the actual weight having been often exceeded by four rods on certain rivers with which we are acquainted in Norway, but in these instances the number of fish has been considerably less. Whilst admitting that its sporting propensities do not equal



ONE DAY'S BAG.



ICELAND PONIES.

those of many Norwegian rivers, it is nevertheless remarkable that more anglers do not frequent such rivers in Iceland, more particularly when due regard is paid to the fact that prices in the former country are rapidly becoming prohibitive to men of moderate means, whereas good fishing may still be obtained in Iceland for comparatively small rents. C. E. RADCLYFFE.

FROM THE FARMS.

A DANISH MILK SUPPLY ASSOCIATION.

ONE grows a little tired sometimes of perpetual insistence on the universal excellence and superiority of that abstract person, the foreigner; but at a moment when the question of a pure milk supply is so much engaging the attention of medical men, and of all thoughtful people, it is at least interesting to learn how that question has been grappled with and robbed of most of its terrors in a country the excellence of whose dairy methods we are all ready to admit, viz., Denmark. That Denmark does, for the moment, take the lead in all questions relating to dairy produce, at least on a large scale, I think most people will acknowledge. This is partly because of the general high level of efficiency her people show, partly on account of the excellent co-operative methods adopted in butter-making, cheese-making, etc. Still, those who wish to imitate her methods, and profit by the experience she has so painstakingly acquired, must not ignore the fact that here, as elsewhere, there is a better and a best, and that nearly all her success is the result of private initiative. That the general average of cleanliness and purity in the milk supply of Denmark is so high, is largely, if not entirely, due to the example of Mr. Gunnar Busck, the founder and managing director of the Copenhagen Milk Supply. Twenty-seven years ago the milk supply of Copenhagen was in an even more disastrous state than that which prevails almost everywhere in England to-day. The only places where milk of any sort could be procured were those where spirits were sold, and the poor man who did not buy spirits had to go without milk. Mr. Busck, impressed by this fact, and by the impurity and lack of cleanliness of the liquid sold and of the methods of dealing with it, started without delay to remedy the evil. From a modest beginning on philanthropic lines the Copenhagen Milk Supply has grown to be a huge, self-supporting business, paying a dividend of 5 per cent. to the shareholders, and able in addition to the ordinary trade to give away, or sell at exceedingly low prices, to the very poor a large quantity of wholesome half-skimmed milk. Thanks to the raising of the general standard, which was the direct result of Mr. Busck's scheme, there are at the present day many very excellent milk supplies in Copenhagen, none of which, however, is carried out on quite equally perfect lines. The points in the management of the Copenhagen Milk Supply to which I wish here to draw attention are under two heads: Firstly, the regulations controlling the farmer who supplies the milk; secondly, those observed at Copenhagen by the distributing society. The farmer has to guarantee:

- (a) The strict observance of the society's rules concerning the cleanliness of animals, cow-houses, and milking methods.
- (b) The observance of definite rules for feeding (including grazing in the summer).
- (c) Observance of rules concerning cooling, use of ice, and transport.
- (d) The removal of all diseased and tuberculous cows.
- (e) The reporting of cases of infectious illness among his hands. The cows are periodically (once a fortnight) examined by a veterinary surgeon, who applies the tuberculin test, and surprise visits are paid frequently by an inspector and an experienced dairymaid.

The society, for their part, pay the highest price in the trade for the milk, and in the event of infectious disease being notified, or the milk of a cow being temporarily under suspicion, continue to pay the same price for the milk as if it were being delivered and used. The Copenhagen Milk Supply Company, on receiving the milk, which arrives in sealed cans each evening, unseal it, taste it, and set aside samples for chemical analysis; filter it, put it up in air-tight glass bottles, and send it out for sale. The ordinary whole milk and the half-skimmed milk (which latter contains 1 per cent. of fat, as no separator is used) are not bottled, but the cans containing these qualities are locked into the vans, and the milk drawn through a tap fixed in the bottom. Three qualities of milk are supplied: Children's milk, from cows which have been kept on a specially selected dietary, prescribed by the company; ordinary whole milk, from cows fed according to the general rules only; and a small proportion of the children's milk which is in addition pasteurised—that is to say, after a second filtering, bottled and corked, put into a boiler heated up to 185deg. Fahr., and then cooled down by ice in twenty minutes: this to meet the wishes of those people who believe in the virtues of pasteurisation. The Copenhagen Milk Supply also sell cream (filtered and bottled), butter, and half-skimmed milk. A special point about their butter is the fact that it never comes into contact with water from beginning to end of its preparation. A very thorough system of bottle and can

washing, with hot and cold water, soda water, and lime water, effectually cleansing the vessels and destroying all germs, forms part of the daily routine. One is struck, on visiting the establishment at Frederiksberg, Copenhagen, by the ample space, light, and air everywhere, as well as by the perfect method, and the dexterity shown by all the employees, who, both men and women, are dressed from head to foot in clean, white clothes. The filters made use of, which are the invention of Mr. Busck, are on the syphon system, the milk being forced up through three layers of gravel—coarse, finer, and finest—and six layers of fine cloth, before being conducted by a pipe at the top into a large tank communicating with the bottling room. Good average wages are paid, and all employees are compelled to notify cases of infectious illness amongst themselves or their families at once, their wages continuing to be paid as usual during their enforced absence. There are, of course, many other points of detail, both in the management of the stock and in the treatment of the milk, from producer to consumer, which there is not space to enlarge upon here; but with the courtesy of a Dane and a philanthropist, Mr. Busck is always ready to put every facility in the way of the enquirer anxious to study and profit by his methods.

About eight years ago, eight Manchester gentlemen formed themselves into the board of directors of the Manchester Pure Milk Supply, a concern modelled on Mr. Busck's plan, and possibly, in some details, even an improvement on his. The concern was a financial failure. No doubt success would have come in time, had it been possible to hold out long enough—indeed, there seemed every prospect of eventual success—but the inaugurate, in starting on so large a scale as they did, made the mistake of trusting too implicitly to the readiness of the public to recognise the value of the advantages offered them. One is sometimes tempted to wonder whether, were free return tickets to Utopia offered to the British people, they would not hesitate to accept them. The Manchester gentlemen took the first steps in the right direction, but after three and a-half years of heavy losses closed their doors, and their dairy was turned into a lithographic printing works! Perhaps, however, they sowed seed which may yet bear fruit. I hear that an undertaking on similar lines, under the management of Mr. Alwyn Thompson, who studied Mr. Busck's methods at first hand, was started a few months ago at Northallerton; the milk is supplied from Wensleydale, justly renowned for the rich quality of the milk and cream it produces, and a large trade bids fair to reward the efforts of the company. The promoters are rightly anxious to make it a self-supporting scheme, which shall not increase the number, already too great, of the charitable institutions of the country.

A combined farm dairy, on a small scale, is carried on at West Huntingdon, Yorkshire, by Carl Sørensen, and there are others, larger and better known. The work done by Sir Horace Plunkett in Ireland, for instance, is known to all, and has the same aim, namely, that of producing clean dairy produce at a profit. Nor would it be fair to conclude this article without a reference to the work being done by the municipal milk depots at present in existence in Liverpool, at St. Helens, Battersea, Finsbury, etc., and by the dépôt of the Health and Housing Reform Association at York. If the Wensleydale Pure Milk Society are able to show us that the sale of perfectly pure milk can be conducted on satisfactory business lines in England, too, perhaps the practical common-sense which is the Englishman's birthright will be stimulated to further efforts in the same direction, and the day may yet dawn when Britain cannot be reproached with want of cleanliness, caution, and system in matters so intimately connected with the health of the community, and the disgraceful mortality among our infant children.

I do not pretend that I am here calling attention to Danish methods for the first time. Mr. Busck's work has already been referred to in the British Press (*Liverpool Courier*, September 12th, 1888, and other papers), and a careful summary of his system was also drawn up by Mr. A. Stewart Macgregor, British Vice-Consul in Copenhagen in 1890, to whose pamphlet I have referred, and published by Scott and Ferguson and Burness and Co. of Edinburgh. There have, however, naturally been developments and extensions since that time.

IMPORTED RABBIT DESTROYERS.

When the people of Australia imported the rabbit they provided themselves with a very striking and expensive object-lesson in the danger of allowing alien immigration. There is an idea now mooted of introducing yet another alien to help in keeping down the rabbits. There are, in some parts of the world, ants that are very destructive to the young of various animals that nest in the ground, and kill the young rabbits in their nests. On the other hand, the question only too naturally arises as to what else they would be likely to kill—perhaps lambs? And until this question is answered, Australia, in spite of her brave motto "Advance," is inclined to hesitate. We are sometimes told that the importation of frozen rabbit to this country has been the practical solution of the rabbit problem in Australia, but it is a solution which applies only to those parts whence access to the sea is easy, and there are immense territories where the rabbit is still a scarcely mitigated nuisance.



"COUNTRY LIFE."

NOW THE LABOURER'S TASK IS O'ER.

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THE UNIVERSITY BOAT RACE.

It has seldom happened that the University Boat Race has been rowed under such splendid conditions as prevailed on Saturday last. Everybody has memories of distinctly bad weather often occurring on this annual contest. As often as not it has taken place in drenching rain and strong wind, and on water producing waves that would scarcely have disgraced the sea itself. But April this year has come to us as though straight out of the imagination of the early poets, bringing cloudless skies and glorious sunlight, while the Thames on Saturday was so smooth that every oar-blade was reflected in the water as clearly as by a mirror. Most of the spectators had arrived in the hope and belief that a splendid

admirable start made by Cambridge. The slight advantage thus gained was steadily increased. Mr. Stuart, who is only twenty-one years of age, and to all appearances has a great rowing career before him, proved an admirable stroke, and in a style that compelled the admiration of the onlookers his crew forged steadily ahead. The pace may be judged from the fact that Craven Steps were reached in 2min. 1sec., and the mile done in 3min. 59sec. By that time Cambridge were two boat lengths in front and rowing beautifully. They kept increasing the lead, until at Chiswick Steps they were three and a-half lengths in front, the time being 11min. 48sec. At Barnes Bridge the distance between the two crews was extended to five lengths, and the winners, rowing very easily, finished in 19min. 24sec., the quickest time for the last four years. Following the traditions of the race, the Oxford men rowed with the utmost courage and determination, never giving up until they had entirely lost, but it was evident that they were beaten more by superior skill than by superior strength. The Cambridge men were not of the same weight, and perhaps might not be of the same stamina, as their opponents, but they are rowing men who have been accustomed to sculling, and in style and finish quite outclassed Oxford. The Dark Blues were distinctly the heavier of the two, and at least three of them are known to be extremely strong men. Mr. Jones (Balliol), Mr. Kirby (Magdalen), and Mr. Evans (University) are all close upon 14st. in weight, but Mr.

Gladstone of Christ Church, who rowed No. 7, is only 10st. 7lb., so that there was a difference of over 3st. between the heaviest and the lightest men of the crew. It is no exaggeration, therefore, to say that they were ill-matched, and that they did not exhibit the same watermanship as the Cambridge men. In the Cambridge crew there was one man—a Mr. Donaldson—who weighed very nearly 14st.; but the others weighed about 12st. each, and though they might not have the strength of their opponents, they were much more active and were more experienced. Mr. Donaldson, the heaviest man, is well known as a promising sculler, and what he had done before was, no doubt, of great assistance to him in the eight. At any rate, the crew were able to work together in a



THE LIGHT BLUES.

struggle would be witnessed. It is true that expert opinion had been gradually inclining in favour of Cambridge for the last ten days or so, but whether they could win the Boat Race or not was doubtful, the Dark Blues forming a crew of such magnificently strong men as are seldom brought together. The only question was whether the power they possessed could or could not be made available in the racing-boat. It is easy to be wise after the event, and every commentator has given many good reasons why the win of Cambridge was inevitable. Concerning the fact there can be no dispute at all. The Light Blues were more active and alert than their opponents. Oxford won the toss, but in the state of the water there was very little advantage in this, and its infinitesimal value was nullified by the



THE CREWS JUST AFTER PASSING BARNES BRIDGE.



THE WINNERS DISEMBARK.

manner that offered a striking contrast to the others, for it was evident from the beginning that the Oxonians had not attained to the unison which is necessary to success in an Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race. It will be interesting to see what effect another year's training will have on the strong Oxford crew.

WILD COUNTRY LIFE

THE INLAND MIGRATION OF OUR MOORLAND NESTING BIRDS.

No problem is of more interest to the ornithologist than the spring migration inland of the lapwings, golden plovers, curlews, and the other birds which every March return to their summer haunts amongst the hills. After a very severe February the frost suddenly broke up on Saturday, March 3rd, and on the morning of that day many of the lapwings were still in large flocks on the fields near the coast. With them, needless to say, were numbers of black-headed gulls, which all through winter remain with the lapwings. March 3rd was the first spring day of the year, and all Nature responded to it instantaneously. By afternoon the lapwings were either breaking up into pairs, or else were migrating rapidly inland, and scarce one was left on the coast, except those which breed there. The next day (Sunday) was a brilliant spring day, and I went up the river to observe the birds. Soon I heard in the distance what I thought

or two beforehand. Friday, March 2nd, was a frosty and wintry day, and yet in the evening about 6 p.m. the first large flock of lapwings passed westward over an upland district where the snow still lay deep. To the



CAMBRIDGE BRING IN THEIR SHIP.

"mere man" there was no sign of any change in the weather,—yet the lapwings evidently knew of it, and so sped on their way inland regardless of frost and snow. Their foresight, however, could not have extended to more than two or three days, as, on the Thursday following, winter again returned, with all its severity, and in some districts the most severe weather of the season was experienced. Twelve inches of snow and 32° of frost is not weather to the liking of the delicate lapwing, and doubtless they wished they had waited a little longer before trusting themselves to the severe climate of the uplands. All the same, they did the next best thing, namely, they left the uplands and descended once more to the coast. Sometimes the lapwings are tempted by a fine day near the coast to migrate inland, where deep snow may still be lying. I have seen one flying at a great height up a lonely glen where several inches of snow still remained. It continued its flight for some time, but, evidently seeing that, the further up it went, the more snow it would encounter, reluctantly turned back. Now here another problem presents itself. Last year a severe snowstorm was experienced in April, when curlews, lapwings, and all the moorland birds had arrived at



THE OXFORD CREW.

their nesting sites. Then the birds remained on the uplands even in the face of frost and snow, and must have been hard put to it to obtain any food. In fact, after the storm, both curlews and lapwings were so weak that they could scarce utter any note except a wheezy, melancholy pipe. Now, why is it that the birds return to the coast in March, but not in April? Of course, by the latter date they are more at home on the moorlands; but not a single pair of birds, to my knowledge, had eggs during the storm last April, so that the reason must be sought other than that of family ties.

THE OYSTER-CATCHER.

The oyster-catcher is another bird whose inland migration it is interesting to watch. In Aberdeenshire very few of these birds nest on the coast, but at the call of spring migrate up the rivers. The Dee seems to be the favourite, no doubt on account of the long stretches of pebbles which are found all up its course. The oyster-catchers began their migration inland on March 4th, but seemed to travel by easy stages, for not one was visible on the middle reaches two or three days after. A friend, however, informed me that a flock passed over Aboyne during the late evening of March 5th; but these were evidently on their way to the upper reaches, so it would seem that those birds which nest furthest up the river are the first to migrate inland. The oyster-catcher adds a great charm to the river which it haunts, and its clear, ringing note is heard at times all the night through. As a rule these birds fly with very rapid wing beats, but I have noted time after time that while uttering a certain kind of note the wings are moved not more rapidly than those of the gull, and the note is uttered at each wing beat. Sometimes two oyster-catchers may be seen, the one flying similarly to the mallard, and the other to the herring-gull. But the latter flight seems only to be used in conjunction with a certain call note. All river birds have a great dislike to the bridges which span the stream at intervals, and give them as wide a berth as possible. An oyster-catcher may be flying swiftly up river just above the surface of the water. One would think that it would save a great deal of time and energy were it to continue its course under the bridge; but no, there is evidently something uncanny about the latter to the bird's mind, so it invariably rises from the surface of the stream, and flies well above the bridge, and I have never once seen an oyster-catcher or, for that matter, any large river bird fly under one; the small birds, however, as the dipper and swallow, seem to ignore the obstruction. Should winter return after the oyster-catchers have come up the rivers they have a difficulty in finding sufficient food, and, being a delicate bird, large numbers may be found dead by the river-side.

THE BLACK-HEADED GULL.

When the lapwings migrate inland they are, as a rule, accompanied by the black-headed gulls, which take up their stations near the plovers until the latter have broken up into pairs. Many people ask me what becomes of this gull during the winter months, as they say they never see it then. The reason for this is that the gulls lose their black heads in August, and remain "white-headed" until the spring. I have seen a gull with black head complete in early February, but not until March is half over do they, as a rule, have their summer plumage. When their heads turn from white to black—or, to be exact, a very dark brown—there is no moult, but the feathers gradually change their colour. The feathers below the eye seem to be the first to change colour, and in the space of a fortnight or three weeks—the time varies somewhat—the whole head has become a very dark brown, giving the birds a much more handsome appearance. The first week in March the gulls migrate inland to the moorland bogs and lochs, where they nest. I was once fortunate enough to see the whole colony arriving at their nesting site from the coast. They had evidently made the journey at a great height, as at first they appeared mere specks in the sky, but gradually swooped down until they were hovering and screaming over the surface of the loch. Then a day or so afterwards, in passing again, I was surprised to see not a single gull on the loch; but it seems that for the first three weeks or so the gulls do not remain regularly at their nesting site, and may even stay away for days on end. Every three or four days, however, they return in increasing numbers, and on March 13th every gull seemed to have arrived, and the noise they made as they wheeled and swooped and chased each other across the water was deafening. After this they returned regularly every night to roost, but during the day were mostly out foraging in the fields. Distance seemed to be nothing to them, and I saw them many miles from the loch making their way homewards. It is a charmingly pretty sight to see the black-headed gulls returning home at sunset, the setting sun lighting up their breasts and wings and tinging them with red. Every now and again they jerk back suddenly in their flight, as if they imagined they were running into some obstacle; at the same time their neck is jerked forward in a peculiar way. I have never been able to make out what the reason for this behaviour is, but probably they are catching insects on the wing. This gull has been called the "laughing gull," but where the resemblance to the human laugh comes in is not at all apparent. At all events, I pity the man whose laugh resembles the harsh cry of the black-headed gull.

SETON P. GORDON.

A BOOK OF THE WEEK.

THE Poet Laureate has chosen a very appropriate moment at which to publish his new poem, *The Door of Humility* (Macmillan). It is a book of elegies closely resembling in substance his predecessor's "In Memoriam," though Mr. Austin has chosen a more familiar versification. A favourable example of it will be found in the following extract from a description of Sunday in England:

The chiming of the Sabbath bell,
The silence of the Sabbath fields,
Over the hamlet cast a spell
To which the gracious spirit yields.
Sound is there none of wheel or wain.
Hush stands the anvil, hush the forge.
No shout is heard in rustic lane,
No axe resounds in timbered gorge.

No flail beats time on granary floor,
The windmill's rushing wings are stayed,
And children's glee rings out no more
From hedgerow bank or primrose glade.

Mr. Austin's aim seems to be that of reviewing all the various phases of religion and philosophy, and we leave him in the end on his knees in the village church wondering what is meant by Life and Love and Sorrow, and praying "Let there be Light! Let there be Light!" Practically he goes over the same ground that was covered by Lord Tennyson, but his outlook is not so far-reaching as was that of the late Laureate. While saying that, we most willingly admire the great thoughtfulness and suggestiveness of the poem. Into it is introduced more patriotism than Lord Tennyson would have admitted. The latter, bringing the world into his imaginative lens, would undoubtedly have made visible the insignificance of any country as compared with illimitable space, as compared even with the great and mighty nations of the dead. And this is not from any lack of love for his country, but the rather that it sinks into the position of an insignificant passion when confronted with the great problems of human duty. Properly speaking his philosophic enquiry begins with the statement that we are a part of Nature, and therefore like her; all the difference is that

She sins upon a larger scale
Because she is more large than we.

Should he "hoist Reason's sail," it is to find that man's beliefs vary with place and time:

His Gods are many or are none,
Saturn and Mithra, Christ and Jove,
Consorting, as the Ages run,
With Vestal choir or Pagan drove.

Abiding still by Northern shores,
He sees far off on Grecian coast
Veiled Aphrodite, but adores
Minerva and Apollo most.

But the quest of the spirit is for Beauty, and Beauty resides chiefly in Nature. The working out of this gives occasion to the introduction of a charming lyric on Spring:

Bound, runnels, bound, bound on, and flow!
Sing, merle and mavis, pair and sing!
Gone is the Winter, fled the snow,
And all that lives is flushed with Spring.

Harry the woods, young truant folk,
For flowers to deck your cottage sills,
And, underneath my orchard oak,
Cluster, ye golden daffodils!

Unfettered by domestic vow,
Cuckoo, proclaim your vagrant loves,
And coo upon the self-same bough,
Inseparable turtle-doves.

Soar, laverock, soar on song to sky,
And with the choir of Heaven rejoice!
You cannot be more glad than I,
Who feel Her gaze, and hear Her voice:

Who see Her cheek more crimson glow,
And through Her veins love's current stream,
And feel a fear She doth but know
Is kin to joy and dawning dream.

Bound, rivulets, bound, bound on, and flow!
Sing, merle and mavis, pair and sing!
Gone from the world are want and woe,
And I myself am one with Spring.

As he goes on, Mr. Austin propounds questions very much indeed in Lord Tennyson's manner. Thus the eleventh elegy is devoted to a discussion of the saying that Love is blind. It is hereabouts that Mr. Austin mostly yields to his besetting sin of verbal carelessness. For example, it would be impossible to imagine Lord Tennyson writing that the belfry strikes the hour announcing "the propinquity" of, say, Maud. What is an umbrageous Vicarage? and does a blackbird "cheer his bride" in a vicarage, umbrageous or otherwise? The passage on which we ask for elucidation is:

While loud the blackbird cheers his bride
Deep in umbrageous Vicarage.

In the following stanza the use of the words "sacrilegious" and "neophyte" utterly destroy the poetic expression:

I through the years had sought to hide
My darkening doubts from simple sight.
'Tis sacrilegious to deride
Faith of unquestioning neophyte.

The same remark might be applied to the word "febrile" in this stanza:

Nay, but repress rebellious woe!
In grief 'tis not that febrile fool,
Passion, that can but overthrow,
But Resignation, that should rule.

Probably these lapses are due only to want of taking pains. Occasionally his language is most felicitous, as in this description of autumn :

The music of the vagrant wind,
That wandered aimlessly, is stilled;
The songless branches all remind
That Summer's glory is fulfilled.

The fluttering of the fallen leaves
Dimples the leaden pool awhile;
So Age impassively receives
Youth's tale of troubles with a smile.

After the preluding, of which we have given a somewhat vague idea, Mr. Austin carries us about, in order, as it were, to discuss questions *in situ*. What does Nature teach us, he asks, in Switzerland? But to his "Where, Whither, Why?" the mountain slope and green glade answer only with "a far-off irresponsible smile." Nature is impassive. He gets no answer, and returns for comfort to the "voice unforget." Italy is largely used for the discussion of conscience, "a comfortable compromise." Mr. Austin glances, and no more, at the modern idea of conscience being evolved in answer to the needs of human society. At Florence he is impressed by the fact that "few come thither now for prayer," though the cheap tripper arrives in multitudes, with map and guide-book in their hands, to tell them what to think and feel. In this connection it may be noted that he uses the Tennysonian phrase, "the windy ways of men," without inverted commas. Naturally, at Rome his thought is engaged with "the paip, that pagan fu' o' pride" :

Then, in his gestatorial Chair
See Christ's vice-regent, bland, benign,
To crowds all prostrate as in prayer
Lean low and make the Holy sign.

Then trumpets shrill, and organ peals,
Throughout the mighty marble pile,
While as myriads concurse kneels
In dense-packed nave and crowded aisle.

Departing from Rome, he carries us on to Constantinople, where reflections of an entirely different kind arise. Here is Mahomed :

Male God who shares his godhead with
No Virgin Mother's sacred tear,
But finds on earth congenial kith
In wielders of the sword and spear:

Male God who on male lust bestows
The ruddy lip, the rounded limb,
And promises, at battle's close,
Hour, not saint nor seraphim.

We may remember here that but for a mistranslation, which runs in the Authorised Version, "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth," there might have been grounds for asserting that Christianity did not on a particular point differ so very widely from Mahomedanism. To follow him further is unnecessary. Where he differs most from Tennyson is in not fully understanding the scientific mind of his contemporaries. What Christianity is menaced by just now is not by the old-fashioned view that so many other religions have existed, but by the patient research which shows that even the virtues of meekness and honesty have been developed by the wants of Man.

SHOOTING.

DOUBTFUL MERITS OF FRENCH PARTRIDGE METHODS.

NOW that the partridge is regarded so very clearly as the first and most important of our game birds, it is natural enough that people should take an interest in every possible means of improving him, and one of the methods that is causing a good deal of interest and enquiry is that of penning the birds according to the French fashion. It is always to be remembered, however, that the problems are a little different in the two countries. Here they are as we all know them, and, granted moderate good will on the part of the farming tenants, the partridges' nests and eggs are not interfered with. But the French game laws are not very operative outside the park fence of the large proprietor, though within that area they are very drastic. The problem of the proprietor is really to plant out partridges each year on the land he shoots over, after raising them within some safeguarding fence. And this problem is very well solved at such a shoot, for instance, as that of M. Ephrussi (to name one that is, by reason of the hospitality of the owner, perhaps better known to English shooters than any other), by raising the birds in pens. There are some two miles of these pens at M. Ephrussi's. Partridges are, of course, monogamous birds, and they seem to be particular in choosing their mates. It does not do merely to put any two of an opposite sex together. They have to be given some freedom of choice, and this is afforded them in the large open pen. When a pair are observed to have made up their minds that they are mutually suited for domestic happiness, they are driven or enticed into smaller side pens, where they are then shut off, and by the time they are turned out into the fields are well able to hide themselves in the covert that will then have attained some height, and, before the shooting season begins (which is at different dates in France, according to the regulations of different departments), will have made themselves at home on the ground, so that there is not the fear of driving them right off the shoot which must always prevail if partridges are driven in a country which is quite strange to them. The pen system, thus conducted, is, therefore, very useful in the peculiar circumstances in which the French landowner is apt to find himself placed; but our circumstances in England are different, and there seems to be no great advantage to be gained from the adoption of a similar system here. For our purposes it seems better to leave the partridges much more to themselves, assisting them by the precautions which have been indicated in these columns previously, as well as elsewhere, for saving their eggs so far as may be from the attacks of poachers of all kinds, whether human, winged, or four-footed, and doing all that we can to improve the stock by ensuring an infusion of fresh blood; and, for the rest, leaving them in the natural conditions, which suit the birds themselves really better, and, at the same time, have the advantage of giving the shooter the feeling that he has to deal with a really wild bird. In this latter respect, partridge-shooting, in England, at all events, has very much the advantage of pheasant-shooting, and it is an advantage that

we should be sorry to feel that it was losing. There is plenty of varied interest about the management of partridges without introducing unnecessary artificiality. One of the points that lend interest to all the problems of shooting is the constant change in the point of view from which they are regarded. It is only of comparatively recent years that we have heard discussion of the varying merits of pheasants. Before the system of driving them out to the guns posted ahead came into vogue this discussion did not arise. And for many years after the discussion had been raging fiercely enough over pheasants, nothing of the kind was said of the partridge. No difference was recognised between partridges in different countries and on different soils. But now all that is changed, and it is recognised that even in a single county, like Norfolk, there is a great difference in hardihood and even in pace of flight between a partridge bred on the chalk hills and one on the lower agricultural land; and a correspondent writing to us from one of the best-stocked estates of this low-ground kind, states that he would never think of getting new blood from anywhere but the chalk. Probably the lime in the soil is a very healthful factor. Mr. Alington discusses the advantages of getting hill partridges, or their eggs, as a change of blood, and we well know that the birds on the fringes of the moors are the best and hardiest. He speaks of the difficulty of managing this, because of the difference between the nesting dates in Scotland and England; but it is a difficulty that it is by no means impossible to surmount, by selecting early nests in the hill country, for we know a case in which fresh blood has been imported into one of the most Southern counties of England by means of eggs taken from nests in Forfarshire and Kincardineshire, with the very best results on the Southern stock. Other differences in partridges that begin to be discussed much more than they used to be are connected with the kind of hedge or belt or valley over which they are driven; but these are problems for the shooter rather than the breeder, and more strictly appropriate to a later season of the year.

WILDFOWL ESPECIALLY IN THE SOUTH-WEST OF SCOTLAND.

THE visits of the wildfowl during last winter were not at all in accord with the expectation we should have held naturally, in consideration of the general mildness. On the East Coast the flocks for a little while at a time were even larger than usual, but they do not seem to have remained long. From the Scottish West Coast a well-informed correspondent writes that "As regards wildfowl it has been an average year. There has been no continued frost to bring them in in quantities, and the large visitations which are known on the East Coast do not visit us in similar quantities. On the Solway large flocks of geese have been seen, but as usual they come and go practically untouched, keeping as they do on the mud flats well from the shores. The growing tendency for the northerly-breeding ducks to come more south to nest leads one to hope that the widgeon may soon establish itself as a general nesting bird in the South-West of Scotland. Hitherto individual cases of such occurrences have

been rare, but we live in hope. Woodcock were disappointing. Every year increasing numbers stay to breed, but these locally reared birds seem to move off elsewhere towards the middle of September. Thus more than usual were killed in August, but the proper foreign invasion in October, on which the total of our woodcocks mainly depends, was not as great as usual. Nineteen hundred and four was a better season for snipe than the last. A hard winter freezes numbers of our pools and marshes, so that their feeding-grounds become more restricted to running water. In this way all the snipe in a large area are gathered into a much smaller locality, and so suffer from the betterment of our larders. Last winter having been open and mild, the snipe and woodcock have been more or less scattered, so that their numbers have probably not been realised."

T. A. Metcalfe.

WOODCOCK ON NEST.

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HEATHER-BURNING LAMP.

WITH reference to the heather-burning, which had been rather delayed owing to constant wet, a Welsh keeper writes to us that they had been making splendid progress there during the last fortnight of March, but suspended the burning at the end of the month because, as he writes, on April 1st, "although I have not yet seen any eggs, I am confident some of the grouse are laying." He adds, "I am glad to say our birds are looking very well." The same correspondent bears testimony to the value of the heather-burning lamp, practically as made by Mr. Macpherson of Inverness, and referred to in our recent article on heather-burning. "I have been using the same sort of thing here," he writes, "since 1899. As you say, they are a long way ahead of the old ways of lighting heather. I know we have found them of great use here. Where the heather has been cut for besom-making we should never have been able to clear off the old straggling bits that were left without them."

HARDIHOOD OF MONGOLIANS.

In confirmation of the notes in our last issue on the hardihood of the Mongolian pheasants and crosses, Mr. Russell forwards us the following extract from a letter from Lady Dunleath, Ballywalter Park, County Down, Ireland: "January 26th, 1906. My poultryman rears any eggs I get from you, and we keep them separate from the other pheasants. Those I had hatched on July 21st last are splendid birds, and were reared with the chickens, having nothing but plain chicken food, no expensive meals or condiments, and our keeper told me not a bird of his would have lived hatched at that date, and that they were stronger at a fortnight old than his May birds at a month old."

UNDERGROWTH IN COVERT.

It is more than likely that we do not take enough account of the value of young beech as an undergrowth plant when we are discussing the difficult problem of growing covert beneath trees. The young beech is recommended, as it seems, for this purpose by Dr. Schlich, though he does not speak in entire sympathy with the game-preserved, regarding the game as in some degree the enemy of the timber, which is his first care—rather as, in course of the history of our own "forest laws," the "vert" gradually grew to be of more consideration than the "venison," which was the first care of those Norman kings who, according to high, though not unanimous, opinion were the beginners of forest laws. The beech will grow under trees, and make nice bushes, which have the advantage over most other kinds of covert that the leaf clings on right through the winter, and pheasants seem to go under it readily. In a further stage of existence the beech will furnish mast, which is very good pheasant food. We may try snowberry, cotoneasters of various kinds, dogwood in damp places, holly—all these will grow under trees, and it is an advantage to have berry-bearing plants, for they again mean food, as well as lodging, for the pheasant. The obvious drawback to the holly, which is otherwise so excellent (for pheasants like its shelter well), is that it has such a slow growth. The same objection applies to box, which will do under trees, although we know coverts in the Eastern Counties where the box undergrowth has grown so dense that it is impossible to beat pheasants out of it, and it requires much thinning. But the planting of holly and box for coverts seems like doing work for one's posterity rather than for one's self. Small spruce fir makes a good undergrowth below big trees, but, perhaps, after all, we shall come back, after trial and experience of many things, to the beech, as recommended by the German, in whose country they study the problems of forestry with much more attention than we give to them here. It is not to be pretended that any of these are immune from the attacks of the rabbits. They all have to be protected, if rabbits are many. Indeed, it is very hard to find the plant that the rabbit will not attack when he is hard pressed for

food. The holly bark he will nibble till it is bare when the snow is on the ground. The published lists of plants that he is supposed never to touch are not to be trusted. We may charitably presume them true of the places in which the knowledge of the compiler of the lists was picked up; but if that be so, it does not follow that the knowledge is of universal application. Rabbits, like other animals, differ in different places, and there are parts of England where the solitary plant that they will not touch is the rhododendron of the common kind, such as *Ponticum*.

There is not another plant that the starving rabbit will refrain from. In the snowy weather the pheasant will gratefully go to the shelter of the rhododendron, but it has no affection for that plant unless the circumstances are exceptional.

THE PREVENTION OF POACHING.

There are many modes by which the man who sells his game may be robbed, but it is quite certain that he tends to diminish them by selling it to some big London dealer rather than to any local man. It is not worth the while of the big man to resort to the small shifts of bribery and corruption, still less to any such baser felony as the receiving of stolen game, which does so much to demoralise keepers and watchers. Moreover, the big man will generally take all the game at a fixed rate for the various kinds—the small and the large pheasants equally—whereas a local dealer, even if he makes what looks on its face as if it were a more flattering offer, is apt to be a picker and chooser—to reject many birds as too small, and so reduce the prices that the seller actually receives below those which the London dealer will give. In the Eastern Counties the Game Protection Association and the Game Egg Guild together have done work that is decidedly good. They have reduced the egg stealing which used to be so common and such a serious cause of loss on partridge estates to something like a negligible quantity.

KEEPER'S METHODS.

Mr. Alington, who wrote the excellent book on partridge-driving and has much of the science of gamekeeping, makes a great point of the necessity that a keeper shall vary his methods in dealing with vermin, because the majority of them are quite intelligent enough to learn by experience, and will not fall into the same kind of snare more than once, nor into one that they have seen fatal to others of their species. That a keeper should vary his methods and his habits is no less useful for successful dealing with the human vermin than with the lower kind. If a keeper's movements are repeated with exactness day after day, the poacher knows exactly where he will be at any particular hour, and can lay his plans accordingly. It is a mistake to think the night is the only time when the poacher is likely to be abroad, so that it is necessary to vary nocturnal methods and watchings only. One of the favourite ways of modern pheasant poaching is for a small gang to go by daylight to a small covert which they know (if they have one of the routine-observing keepers to deal with) will not be visited by the keeper for certain hours in the day. They have with them some small light silken nets. These they lay loosely over the bushes towards one end of a covert; then, entering the covert from the other end, they walk silently through it, pushing the pheasants before them till the birds are driven into the nets, get entangled in them, and can be caught and bagged. It is all done very quietly, very quickly, and, with a watcher or two out along the road near the covert to give the alarm, is not very risky work. But if a keeper varies his rounds, is here one day at one hour and at another hour the next, the poachers cannot lay their plans with anything like the same confidence as if they knew beforehand what his movements will be.

ARTIFICIAL NEST EGGS AND GAME.

Those, and they are many, that are bothered by the problem of combining foxes with partridges and other kinds of game, may find some useful hints in a little book called "Game and Foxes," lately published by Mr. Horace Cox. It is written by Mr. F. W. Millard, secretary to the Game-keepers' Association. But while there are not a few good hints, there are also some points on which the writer's counsel is to be taken with reserve. His recommendation, for instance, to place artificial eggs in partridges' nests is one of which we should ask some demonstration to prove its efficacy. The difficulty of finding an artificial egg on which partridges will sit has not yet been overcome, and though there is, of course, a difference between "sitting on" and "laying to," it is hard to think that the partridge would not detect the fraud. Pheasants, of course, are much more careless, and can be imposed on easily. Again, in discussing the misnamed "Euston" system he speaks of artificial eggs being substituted for the real ones, the fact being that what are substituted for the fertile and fresh eggs are hard-boiled, infertile eggs of a previous year. Even pheasants' eggs will do; but no artificial egg has yet been found, so far as we can learn, to impose on the partridge mother. The author's general attitude towards this system is not very easy to see, but we must suppose that he condemns it finally as of very little

practical use; for he remarks that by acting in accord with it "the eggs are removed during a period when they are invariably thoroughly safe, and once more committed to the care of the parent bird at positively the most critical stage." It is perfectly true that they are, of necessity, committed to the parent at the most critical stage, that of hatching, but to say that they are "invariably" and "thoroughly" safe during the previous period is to throw strong adverbs about in a most reckless and misleading way. The hatching-time, when the bird is moving, the chicks coming out, and in consequence much scent thrown off, is beyond question the most dangerous time; but to say that

nothing is gained in security by having the eggs in safety under a hen during the previous sitting-time is contrary to all reasonable expectation and the practical experience of those who know most about the partridge and have studied its ways in its most favoured home, East Anglia, from their childhood upwards. It is, of course, a kind of duty to point out a few little errors of this kind in a book that might conceivably be accepted as a guide, but such criticisms do not mean that there are not many hints of value in the book, and that it may not be found most useful to study by people who want to keep game and foxes together.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE POISONOUS YEW.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]
SIR,—Can you kindly inform me at what time of the year the leaves of the yew are especially dangerous to stock?—H. P.

[They are dangerous at all times, but more so when young growth begins.—ED.]

APPLE TREES IN GRASS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]
SIR,—Your correspondent "S. A. S." makes some pertinent remarks on our experiments of this subject in COUNTRY LIFE of March 31st. He rightly concludes that, since trees grown so as to nearly exclude the access of air and moisture did not suffer in the same way as did the grass-grown trees, the action of the grass could not be detrimental owing to its depriving the trees of air and moisture. This has been proved in several other ways, and we may add that if it was only recently that "S. A. S." visited our farm, he could not have realised the full force of the evidence on this point, for the cement-covered trees have in late years suffered from other causes, so that they approximate to the grass-grown trees much more than they did at first. The question of food supply, which "S. A. S." suggests as a possible explanation, is also one which we think we have quite put out of court by numerous experiments, and we are driven to some other alternative explanation—namely, that the grass develops something which is actively poisonous to the tree-roots. This something may be produced directly, and may be an acid, as he suggests, though we doubt this; or it may be a case of indirect action, possibly through the intervention of bacterial life. This is a matter which we are still investigating. The grassing over of young trees in all soils appears always to have the same disastrous effect as it had here at Woburn, but that is not so in the case of old-established trees. If the soil is shallow, and the roots near the surface, then the effect may be quite as bad as with young trees—indeed, we have killed many trees eight or ten years old by grassing them; but if the soil is deep, and the roots have extended a long way below the surface, the trees may often be grassed over with no apparent damage. It is probable, however, that the character, as well as the depth, of the soil may be a determining factor as to whether injury will occur or not. One very remarkable result of partially grassing established trees, so as to cause but a limited amount of injury, is that the check given to the growth throws the tree into very heavy bearing, and at the same time the peculiar action of the grass causes the fruit to become brilliantly coloured, a case of beneficial effects being produced by moderate ill usage. The question, however, is too wide a one to discuss



OLD HERON ON THE LOOKOUT.

here. We have dealt with it fully in our first, second, third and fifth reports (published by Messrs. Eyre and Spottiswoode). The third report, which deals exclusively with this subject, is, however, out of print.—SPENCER PICKERING.

HERONS AND THEIR NESTS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I enclose you two photographs of herons' nests. These nests are rather singularly placed, being built in a Scotch fir tree not more than 25ft. from the ground. Herons usually choose the highest trees. They are in a very small wood, which is only 200yds. from the main road between Blackpool and Garstang. The year before last some rooks from a rookery on an adjoining property about half a mile off stole the eggs in one of the nests, and last year I watched the herons driving away the rooks. One day I counted eighteen rooks fighting one heron, and the peculiar cry of the heron could be heard a long way off; so much so, that when bicycling on the main road I went back to see what was happening. The herons have built here for a great many years, and, needless to say, the tree is well protected with barbed wire to prevent the nests being robbed. The nests are made very roughly of long twigs, lined with leaves of the yellow iris, which, when dry, go quite light, which is shown in the photographs. Last year there were four young ones in one nest and three in the other. The birds go away as soon as they can fly, and do not return till the following spring.—CHARLIE ATKINSON.

BIRDS' QUICKNESS IN NEST-BUILDING.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Surely it must have occurred to many of us now and then, going about in our gardens, to wonder at the sudden apparition of a bird's nest obvious to our eyes which we had never seen before, and yet is a finished work of art. It has grown, as it seems, almost in a single night, and yet it looks as if its architect might have taken as long over it as was spent in building Ancient Rome. When we watch for the bird, so as to study the manners of the artificer, we are quite as likely as not to find him idling. We wonder how the nest could have been built. The truth is that birds are very much creatures of moods. The truth is also that when once their mood is turned, even if it be only temporarily, towards nest-building, they go forthwith at that nest-building business with a veritably winged energy. No creature that merely runs can emulate it. Lately I amused myself watching a wren,



YOUNG HERON ON NEST.

smallest of architects, in a mood of nest-building such as this. One bird or the other of the pair (but I am almost sure that it was always the same) came to the nest seventeen times in 10 min., and each time bearing quite a large contribution to the house, either moss or twig or feather, or something of the kind. It did not stay to pick and choose the position of the piece in the building; it seemed to know at once just where it was going to put it—"so as to make each stroke tell," as the masters of painting tell us—and then off again to fetch another bit. And it did not seem very eclectic about what it picked up in the way of material. It took at once what came, and was grateful, unlike the poor old maid in the fable who went all through the wood looking for a stick so straight that she never found a stick at all. Unfortunately, this nest was never finished, so that I was not able to take the total time consumed in its building. It was one of those unfinished essays in architecture which wrens are so fond of making.—H.

A RENAISSANCE DOOR-KNOCKER.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]
SIR,—I send you herewith a photograph of a beautiful door-knocker, which, so far as I know, has escaped the attention of connoisseurs. It is of Genoese origin, and was bought not long ago in Genoa by Mr. R. Napier Miles to adorn the door of his beautiful house at King's Weston, near Bristol. To my thinking it is one of the finest specimens of Renaissance ironwork that I have ever seen. The design has that combination of boldness and finish which marks the very best period of Italian metal-work. Your readers will notice the delicate tracery of the wings of the queer bat-devil in the centre of the design, the grace of the curve formed by the two backward-bending bodies of the figures that form the ring, and the general balance and proportion of the whole; while the vigour of the grotesques at top and bottom, the simplicity of the general plan, and the impression of weight and solidity it conveys are no less deserving of admiration. Clearly it belongs to a period—early sixteenth century, I should say—when the mediæval naïveté and strength had been toned and rarified—not yet emasculated—by classic influence. It has often occurred to me that there must have been many beautiful door-knockers on London houses, now lost to the possessors and the nation. Had our ancestors' nefarious practice of "knocker-wrenching" anything to do with our present deficiency in this matter? Nowadays the safety of our streets is so complete that there is no reason why an opportunity for increasing our store of beautiful specimens of craftsmanship should not be embraced by all who are building or designing houses, and I am glad to notice a number of novel and graceful, if rather insignificant, knockers on the doors of London houses. I must not close without remarking that that nefarious practice of knocker-wrenching was, in one instance at least, worked for our benefit. Few people know that on the front door of the house of a certain peer in a certain London square (which peer and which square wild horses shall not drag from me, lest someone should go and "wrench" it



THE POLE-TRAP AND THE KINGFISHER.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I trust you will excuse an expression of surprise that, in a recent issue of COUNTRY LIFE, alternative means should have been suggested to take the place of the now, thank goodness, illegal pole-trap for the destruction of the poor kingfisher. I claim to be as keen a fisherman and pisciculturist as most men, but at the idea of ranking poor Halcyon as a poacher, who is to be treated with the utmost rigour of the law, I become a rebel out and out! It is true he eats a few young trout and salmon, but he lives far more upon minnows and other coarse fishes (for the good and sufficient reason that they are very much easier to catch); but even were it otherwise, surely we can spare him his small needs in return for the pleasure he affords us by a sight of his beautiful plumage as he glides past? His brilliant colours too often lead to his destruction at the hands of the loafer with a gun on the open waters near the sea, which are his winter resorts; and this, together with natural causes—summer floods, which invade his nesting hole, and severe winters, which starve him, from the impossibility of obtaining food in the frozen streams—is quite sufficient to prevent his undue increase. Let us look, then, with a kindly eye on his trifling pectoral when he comes back to our trout streams in summer, and cast from us such heinous thoughts as trying to invent new methods for his destruction!—LICHEN GREY.

MICE AND BULBS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I noticed a letter in your "Correspondence" column last week headed "Mice and Bulbs," in which the writer says, "The shrews, of course, do no harm." Now my experience is that shrews do damage bulbs, or, at any rate, their shoots. I found my English irises constantly nibbled off as fast as they appeared some three years ago, and on putting down a trap caught two shrew mice, after which the damage ceased. This is not proof positive, but I think you will agree with me it is good enough for a gardener to act upon.—B.

WINE CARTS OF FRASCATI.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I send a photograph that perhaps you will think sufficiently interesting to publish in COUNTRY LIFE. It represents the *carretti*, or two-wheeled wine carts, on which small casks filled with wine are packed in regular rows to be carried to Rome. A triangular hood, covered with rough, undressed sheepskin, painted over in bright colours, and supported on poles, is fixed on the left side of the cart, under the shade of which the driver sits, and sleeps as he jars along the road. It is drawn generally by a mule, whose headgear is sometimes decorated with a tuft of cock's feathers rising between his ears. At the end of the right shaft hangs a bunch of hay, from which the mule tears a mouthful whenever he feels inclined. Under each cart hangs a cow's horn, placed there as a protection against the evil eye. A little dog of the Pomeranian breed always accompanies the cart, faithfully guarding



before I can get the chance of doing it myself) there is a door-knocker the genuine work of Benvenuto Cellini. Its present possessor came by it through strictly honest means, but the man who brought it to England some hundred years ago acquired it by the simple process of "wrenching" it from the door of its then owner in Corfu. Let us be slow to blame him. Are not the Elgin Marbles still in the British Museum?—F. S. B.

it night and day. His favourite seat is beside his master under the shade of the hood. The carts set off in the afternoon, and should their journey be long, they travel all night, resting during the hours when the heat of the sun would set the wine into fermentation. The paved road in the foreground is a very fine specimen of causeway so much in vogue during the first century.—J. A.